

WEST DENVER SMALL BUSINESS REPORT

WEST DENVER SMALL BUSINESS COALITION | 2021



OVERVIEW



This report summarizes the outreach conducted by the West Denver Small Business Coalition (WDSBC) during the summer of 2021 to identify top needs and priorities of west Denver's small businesses. It begins with an overview of the WDSBC and covers what we heard, the results of a survey of 217 small business owners, and next steps and recommendations for small business support.

For more details on specific business corridors, pages 12 - 23 break down key findings for each business corridor and highlight local resources and stories from select small businesses. Information about specific corridors can be found on the following pages:

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Morrison Road	12
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*About the **West Denver Renaissance Collaborative***

The West Denver Renaissance Collaborative (WDRC) is an initiative of the Denver Housing Authority and the City to advocate, partner and provide responsive solutions to top community needs of DHA's neighborhoods, many of which are vulnerable to involuntary displacement and experiencing rapid changes in affordable housing.

ABOUT THE WEST DENVER SMALL BUSINESS COALITION

The West Denver Small Business Coalition (WDSBC) was formed in June 2020 and represents the first coordinated effort of local leaders to advocate for and support west Denver's small businesses, many of which are immigrant-owned and comprise some of Denver's most unique cultural corridors. The majority of west Denver businesses are not part of an organized Business Improvement District. At the onset of the pandemic, local business leaders and service providers identified a gap in resources going to support west Denver businesses, in part because there was no coordinated directory of businesses or a conduit to share information about resources. In addition, barriers such as online-only applications, a lack of digital accounting systems to complete applications, and language barriers made it difficult for west Denver business owners to successfully apply for relief funds.

In late 2020, the WDSBC secured grant funding from SPARCC and Mile High Connects to launch a west Denver focused project with the objective of identifying and better understanding the needs and priorities of small businesses in the area. The WDSBC used grant funding to hire a Community Connector to conduct outreach to businesses, create the first west Denver small business directory, and provide

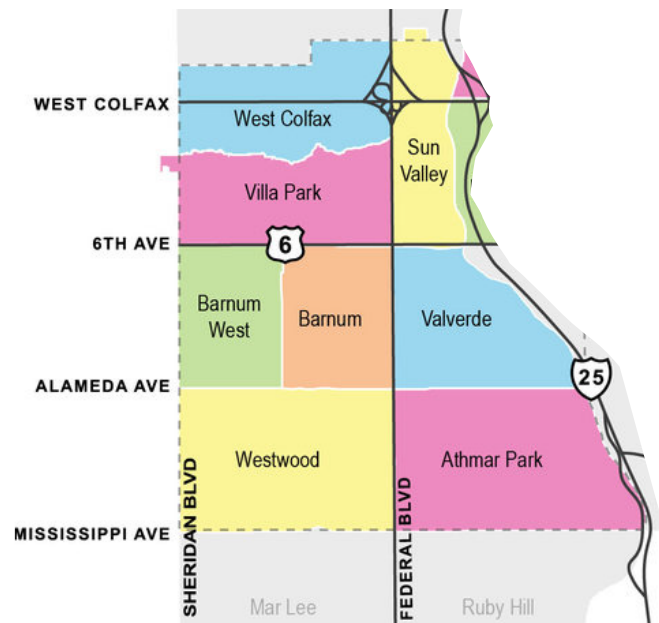
WDSBC PARTNERS



ABOUT **WDSBC**

technical assistance to businesses as needed. The geographic focus area included businesses within formal and informal districts such as the West Colfax BID, Morrison Road, and the Little Saigon district, as well as businesses dispersed along other major corridors.

The WDSBC is convened by the West Denver Renaissance Collaborative and includes representatives from the West Colfax BID, the Morrison Road and Little Saigon cultural districts, City partners, and nonprofit technical assistance providers. These partners combine to offer a wealth of institutional knowledge, strategic planning, technical expertise, and success in reaching business owners, particularly those for whom English is a second language. The WDSBC meets biweekly to coordinate and support west Denver's small businesses.



Geographic focus area of WDSBC

OUTREACH **APPROACH**

The WDSBC created a comprehensive list of west Denver businesses through data collected from the Denver Office of Economic Development and Equity (DEDO), Google Maps, and other online resources. The WDSBC combined this information with in-person canvassing, led by a local Community Connector, to identify more than one thousand businesses in the west Denver area.

The WDSBC developed a survey to capture information about the demographics and top needs of businesses. The survey and resource materials were translated into English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. **Through canvassing, the coalition partners worked together to connect with over 600 businesses and received surveys from 217 businesses.**

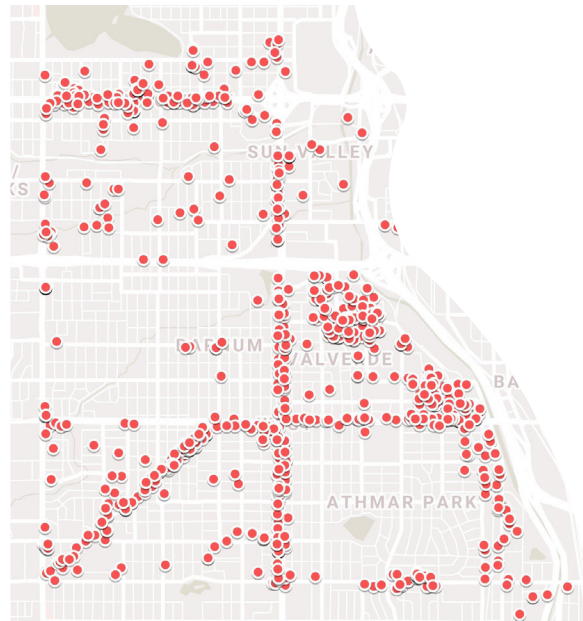
West Denver is home to over one thousand businesses run by a diverse group of business owners; many have been in business for ten or more years. Of the 217 businesses surveyed, more than three quarters identified as Latino/a, nearly half as an immigrant or refugee, and a third were owned by women.

In order to prioritize outreach to small, locally owned businesses and those most at risk of closing due to the pandemic, WDSBC created "targeted" business categories excluding chains and larger industrial businesses, construction, real estate businesses, social services, and nonprofits from the outreach process.

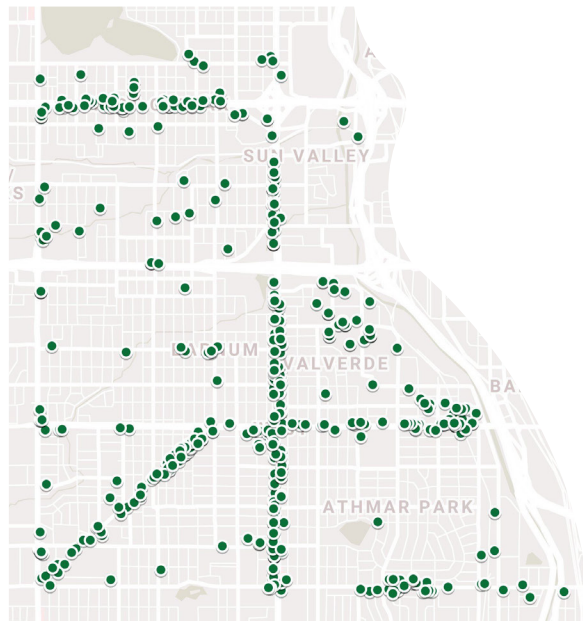
Targeted businesses included:

- Grocery stores
- Restaurants
- Retail businesses
- Auto services
- Personal care and health
- Financial and professional services

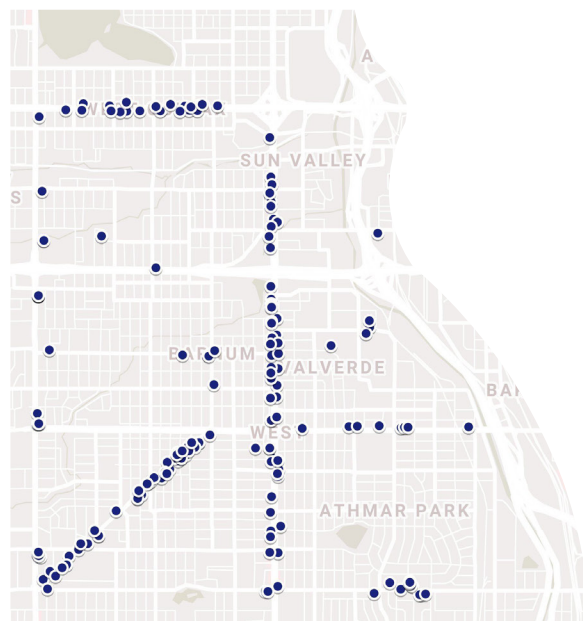
Service and nonprofit businesses were not the focus for this outreach, but are important in west Denver and may be an important future study or project.



Total number of businesses: 1,044



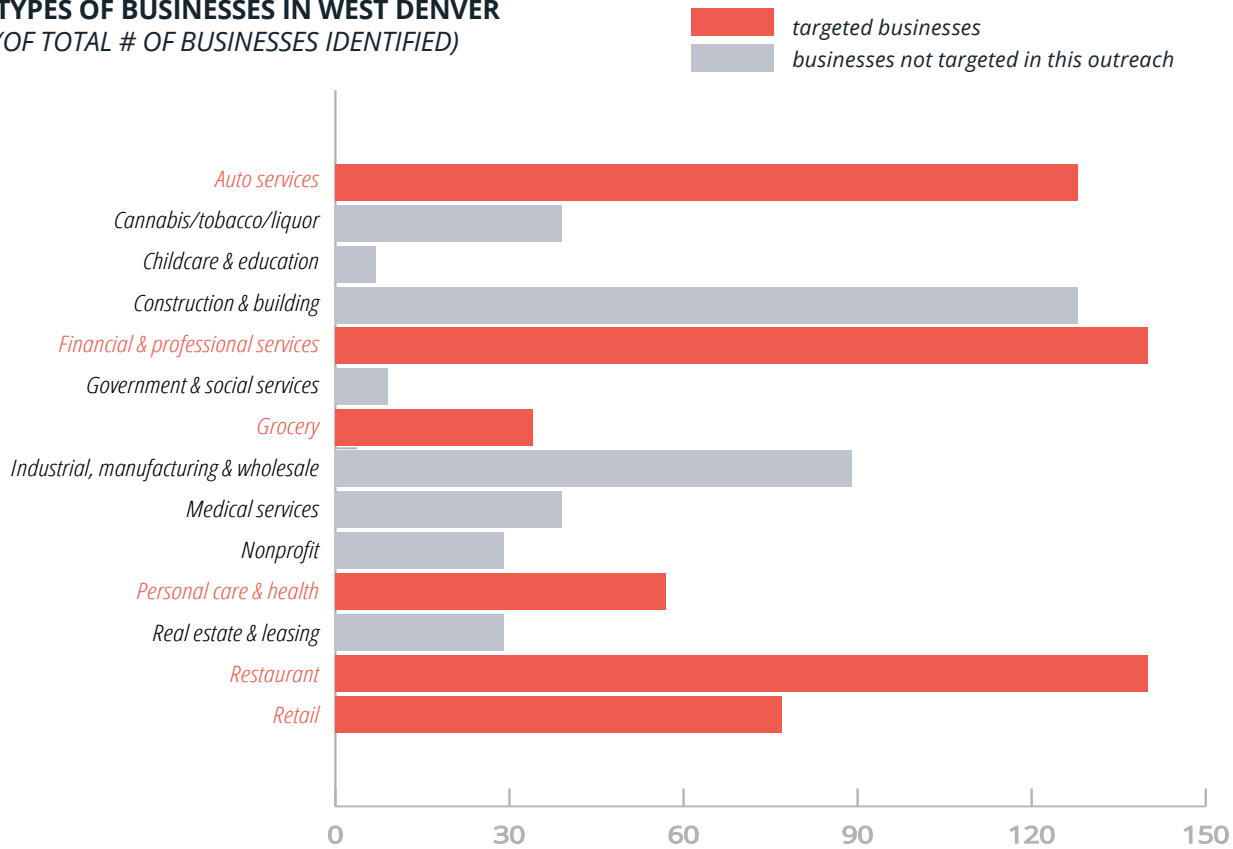
Number of targeted businesses: 576



Number of surveys collected: 217

SURVEY RESPONSES

TYPES OF BUSINESSES IN WEST DENVER
(OF TOTAL # OF BUSINESSES IDENTIFIED)



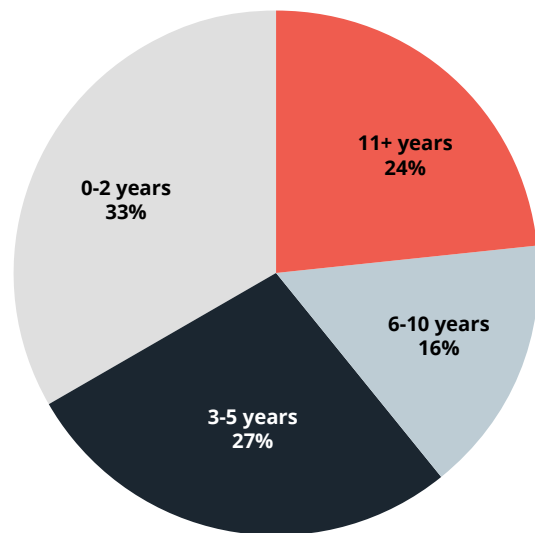
TYPES OF BUSINESSES IN WEST DENVER
(OF TOTAL # OF BUSINESSES SURVEYED)

23% ARE MULTI-GENERATIONAL FAMILY BUSINESSES

93% ARE MICROBUSINESSES (1-9 EMPLOYEES)

57% PREFER SPANISH AS THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN BUSINESS?



DOES THE OWNER IDENTIFY IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS?

77% LATINO/A

45% IMMIGRANT OR REFUGEE

33% WOMAN

18% WHITE

7% ASIAN AMERICAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER

“

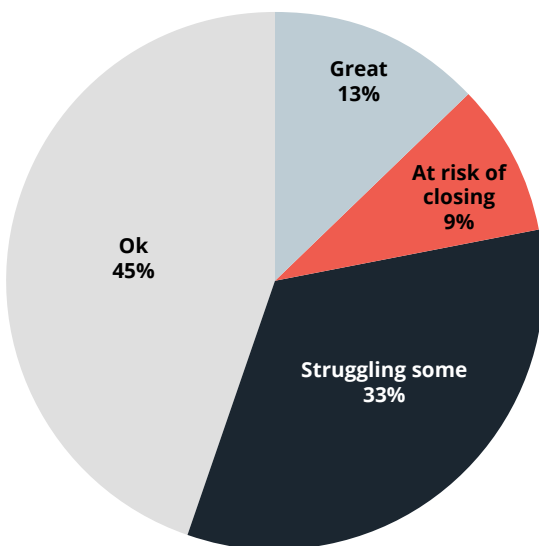
We opened our business 37 years ago; my parents were immigrants and started the business.

- West Denver business owner

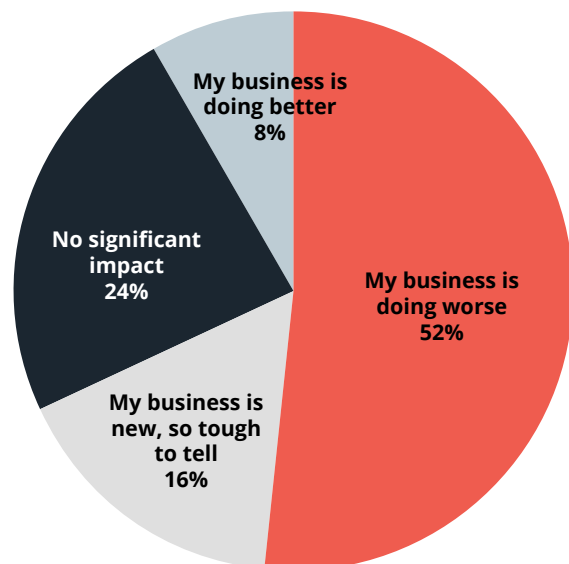
We are a Spanish-speaking business helping the community.

- West Denver business owner

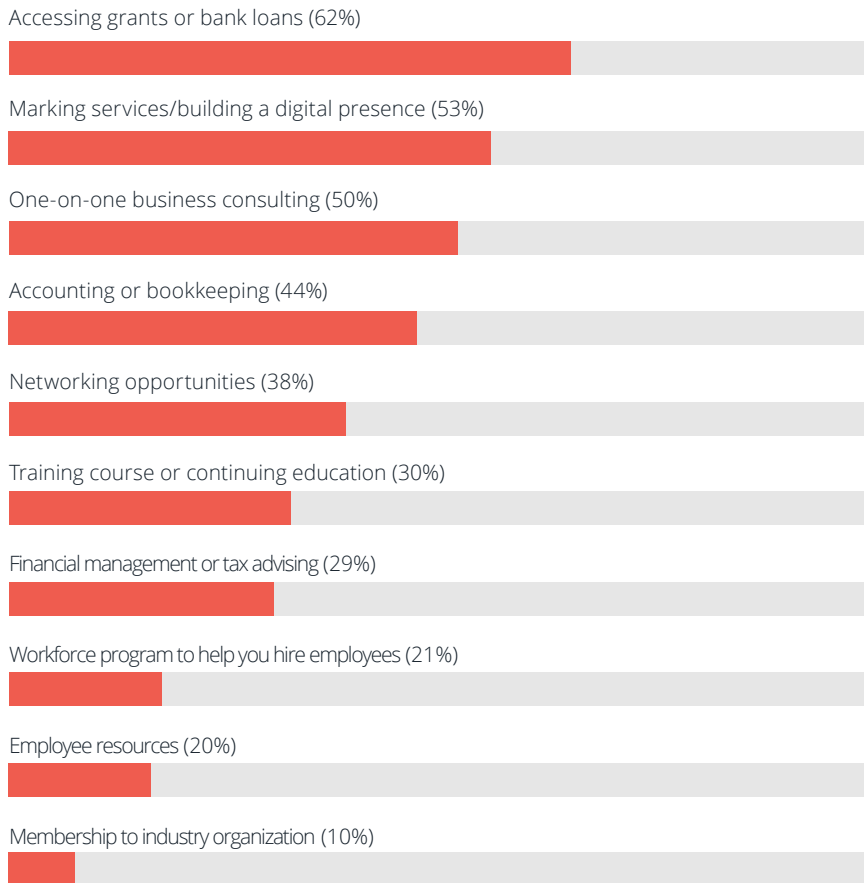
HOW IS YOUR BUSINESS DOING RIGHT NOW?



HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED YOUR BUSINESS?

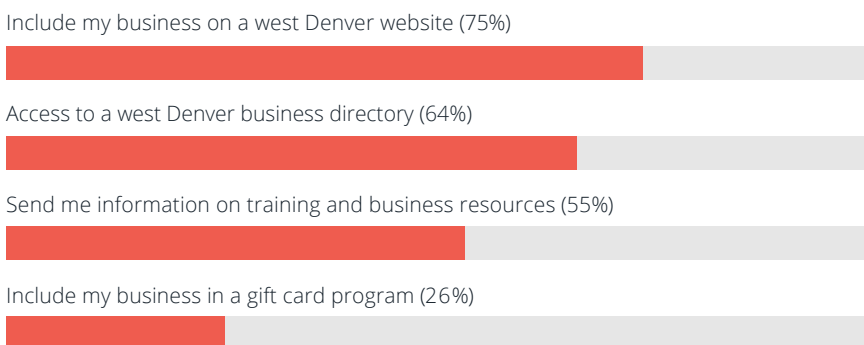


ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE FOLLOWING FREE OR LOW-COST SERVICES?



The top need identified by businesses was technical assistance in applying for grants. A majority of businesses also asked for marketing support, with three quarters asking to be included on a website that promotes west Denver businesses. One-on-one business consulting and support with accounting and taxes were other priorities.

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS?



KEY TAKEAWAYS

West Denver's small business owners shared stories of resilience and resourcefulness in the face of immense challenges. Some business owners took on second jobs to help cover expenses or enlisted the support of their friends and families to help staff their business or provide loans. Key takeaways from conversations with business owners and surveys include:

- 1. Many west Denver small businesses successfully pivoted their business model to adapt to the pandemic** by adopting online platforms, often for the first time, and offering virtual services. Others launched new businesses despite the challenges of the pandemic; more than one-quarter of businesses surveyed were less than two years old.
- 2. Many businesses in west Denver are not receiving resources because they are not formally registered or part of a district that tracks or partners to provide support.** Many business owners reported not knowing about resources that were available to support them during the pandemic.
- 3. Many business owners struggled to apply for grants or loans on their own, often because they did not have the required financial documents.** Some did not qualify for grants or were fearful to apply because they did not have a Social Security number; others shared that they completed applications for relief funding but never heard back. Many owners expressed feeling demoralized by the challenge of keeping their business open and like there was no help available to them. A few remarked that meeting with a canvassing partner was the first time anyone had come by their business with resources.
- 4. Safety and security were major concerns of business owners.** Several shared stories of attacks and robberies, and many expressed a desire for a stronger police presence in the area. Homelessness and graffiti were other areas of concern.
- 5. Small business owners continue to be interested in how to grow their knowledge and expertise,** although many expressed limited capacity to attend trainings and classes because of business hours, reduced staffing, and the demands of running their business.
- 6. Gentrification and rising costs are contributing to business closures in west Denver.** WDSBC identified at least 126 businesses that had closed or likely closed since 2019, approximately 10% of all businesses in the area. WDSBC was not able to verify what caused each business closure, but anecdotal reports suggest that changing neighborhood conditions were a factor in at least some closures and are serious concerns for many of the small businesses still operating in west Denver.

***Gentrification** is the process in which the character of a historically disinvested area is changed by means of real estate and other public and private investments, which cause demographic changes that create displacement of low- and moderate-income residents and lead to the loss of cultural diversity and social cohesion.*

NEXT STEPS

The West Denver Small Business Coalition will continue to work collaboratively to preserve and strengthen two of Denver's most culturally rich business districts - Morrison Road and South Federal's Little Saigon District - while creating supports for all small businesses across southwest Denver.

The Denver Streets Partnership and the Sun Valley Kitchen are leading the West Denver Rising initiative, which will bring together the Sun Valley, Little Saigon, and Morrison Road communities to collaboratively plan and carry out a series of international marketplaces featuring local entrepreneurs and businesses that highlight west Denver's cultural diversity, with the goal of developing a sustainable, long-term business model for marketplaces for years to come. West Denver Rising will host three marketplace-style events in 2022 that will bring joy and opportunities for marketing and promotion for businesses.

In addition, drawing from the top priorities cited by business owners, **WDSBC is planning or working together to meet the following small business**

needs, drawing the combined expertise and unique contributions of all coalition partners:

- **Maintaining a west Denver small business listserv to share information about resources and updates with small business owners**
- **Connecting business owners in need with their neighborhood resources and technical assistance providers, such as Mi Casa Resource Center**
- **Publishing a west Denver business guide to promote businesses in the region**
- **Developing grant readiness workshops to support businesses in putting together needed documents, registering with the Secretary of State, and providing tax and accounting assistance**
- **Developing a dedicated west Denver business website**
- **Pursuing other marketing and promotional opportunities**

VISIT:

www.LittleSaigonDenver.com | *restaurant guide for Little Saigon district (South Federal)*

www.WestwoodFood.com | *restaurant guide for Morrison Road (Westwood)*

www.MyWDRC.org/small-business | *resources for small businesses and downloadable business directory*

www.ShopWestDenver.com | *west Denver business guide (coming soon!)*

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

With 83% of west Denver at risk of gentrification, the preservation of cultural businesses is critical to maintaining west Denver's sense of place, preserving community resources, and preventing involuntary displacement. Historic disinvestment and discriminatory policies have limited west Denver residents from accessing resources and capital, resulting in reduced support systems, financial instability, and low economic and job growth. Millions of dollars in new public and private real estate investments are driving up costs and creating change in west Denver, where thousands of residents have already been displaced. To ensure economic development and public improvements benefit west Denver's low-income population, these businesses and their employees need a broad range of supports to remain in place. Three recommendations for support include:

- 1. West Denver needs dedicated, sustainable funding to ensure that small businesses survive ongoing neighborhood change.** A permanent West Denver Business Hub attentive to all small businesses throughout west Denver and coordinated amongst service providers would be essential in providing the ongoing support that small businesses need to thrive.
- 2. Dedicated funding for experienced Community Connectors will ensure that resources, programming, and support services reach business owners and are**

accessible and responsive to their needs.

Locally-based Community Connectors were essential to this outreach effort; their language skills and familiarity with local businesses helped bolster the number of business owners and employees who felt comfortable sharing their stories and responding to the survey.

- 3. New policies and programs are needed to monitor, assist businesses, and prevent involuntary displacement that follows public investment.** Anecdotal reports from business owners and staff suggest that rising costs and changing neighborhood demographics are impacting their ability to stay in place, including prior to the pandemic. Businesses need technical assistance and flexibility with City policies in order to invest in their own properties. More work is needed to understand how businesses are being impacted by gentrification and to develop policies, tools, and programs that preserve west Denver's small and cultural businesses.

The following pages highlight findings from different business corridors in west Denver and feature stories of some west Denver businesses. These stories are representative of the experiences of many small businesses and provide insight into the challenges faced by west Denver's business community as well as their resilience to adapt and survive.

CORRIDOR SPOTLIGHT: MORRISON ROAD

CORRIDOR STATS

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

77

NUMBER OF TARGETED BUSINESSES

60

NUMBER OF SURVEYS

51

DEMOGRAPHICS*

90% Latino/a

49% Immigrant

31% Woman

90% have 0-9 employees

MOST COMMON TYPES OF BUSINESSES

1. Restaurant (17)
2. Auto services (16)
3. Financial and professional services (9)

*of businesses surveyed

NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE:

BUCU WEST DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

BuCu West Development Association was founded in 1987 to support the predominantly minority- and immigrant-owned small businesses along the Morrison Road corridor, to counteract the decades of historic disinvestment in the neighborhood, and to promote opportunities for generational wealth-building through entrepreneurship and small business ownership. BuCu works directly with immigrant and BIPOC business owners to grow their businesses and provide support for the challenges they face, including systemic discrimination and anti-immigrant policies.

BuCu's mission is driven by the celebration and promotion of Westwood's cultural diversity and distinct community identity. Supporting and promoting local artists and cultural festivals such as the Westwood Chile Festival are examples of ways BuCu elevates and centers Westwood's cultural heritage in its work.



Esther Rivera, a West Denver Community Connector, speaks to a business owner during a canvassing event.

GLORIA URBINA

ABARROTES GLORIA MARKET

4845 MORRISON ROAD, WESTWOOD

Gloria was born in Chihuahua, Mexico but moved to the United States as a young girl. Gloria started working when she was 12 years old, first to help her family pay the bills and later to support herself and her four children.

In 2007, tired of juggling multiple jobs that left her with no time to spend with her kids, she decided to start her own business with money she saved through her 401k. Gloria opened her first business without the help of a loan, which she did not know were available to businesses. In 2010, facing an increase in rent, she relocated to Morrison Road where she opened Abarrotes Gloria Market.

Gloria has persevered through several challenging times since opening her business more than a decade ago. In 2011, a car crashed into her building and knocked down half of her concrete wall, forcing her to close for seven months. During the COVID-19 pandemic her customer base declined, making it difficult to pay her bills. She has started to work a second job during the day for supplemental income so that she can keep her store open at night. Gloria says she will continue to do whatever it takes to keep her business open.



“

At this point in my life I have thought about closing my business for good... But I don't want to close it. I will continue to figure out how to keep the store open to the public.

I've been working since I was 12 years old until now at 48, without having any time off for myself, on my own since 2010, only my store and myself. I love my store.

- Gloria Urbina

CORRIDOR SPOTLIGHT: **FEDERAL BLVD**

CORRIDOR STATS

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

209

NUMBER OF TARGETED BUSINESSES

172

NUMBER OF SURVEYS

68

DEMOGRAPHICS*

71% Latino/a

51% Immigrant

12% AAPI

93% have 0-9 employees

44% have been in business

11+ years

MOST COMMON TYPES OF BUSINESSES

1. Restaurant (56)
2. Auto services (36)
3. Retail (30)

**of businesses surveyed*

NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE: **DENVER STREETS PARTNERSHIP**

Denver Streets Partnership collaborates with local businesses along South Federal Boulevard to celebrate the cultural diversity of the corridor while improving traffic safety and the pedestrian environment. Officially designated the Little Saigon Business District, this area is known for its Asian and Latinx restaurants, grocery stores, and shops.

DSP has become a trusted advocate for businesses in Little Saigon, helping to lead a movement to create a formal Business Improvement District, which was stalled due to the pandemic. DSP continues to conduct outreach to small businesses and to coordinate with business owners to identify needs and advocate for policy and practices that would help them stay in place. They support marketing and promotional materials for creative events that celebrate the area's cultural heritage, including the annual Lunar New Year Celebration.

In addition, DSP has connected restaurants with funds and technical assistance to create outdoor patios and supports small businesses in applying for COVID relief grants. DSP and BuCu West worked together to launch two new websites, littlesaigondenver.com and westwoodfood.com, that complemented each corridors' diverse food scene. DSP staff act as a liaison between the Little Saigon Business District and government partners, helping to identify and overcome challenges that create trust issues between immigrant business owners and government organizations.

VICTOR NGO-SMITH

NEW COTTAGE ARTS SCHOOL

655 S FEDERAL BLVD, UNIT A, WESTWOOD

Victor Ngo-Smith opened New Cottage Arts in June 2019 to create a space where people could come together to learn about music and visual arts. He selected a location on South Federal Boulevard, where he had spent time working in his uncle's restaurants, in order to bring a stronger music and arts presence to a traditionally underserved neighborhood of color. Victor believes that diversity and inclusion are needed in arts education and is dedicated to providing affordable, accessible and inclusive programming to everyone in his community.

Because of the pandemic, New Cottage Arts had to cancel classes for several months, and Victor dipped into personal savings in order to provide refunds for canceled programming. New Cottage Arts applied for an EIDL loan but was denied, and only received a small PPP loan because they were a brand new business. In order to shift to virtual programming, they had to upgrade technologies and hardware, though many in the community remain hesitant to commit to online art and music learning. Many families discontinued classes and lessons and have yet to re-enroll due to continued pandemic fears.

In addition to these challenges, two increases in their rent have depleted their reserves. Now they are focused on pursuing as many funding sources as possible to continue programming and retain their teachers and staff.



“

Through these challenging times, we continue to strive for the highest quality, and most equitable and inclusive programming for our community, whom have shown tremendous strength and resilience, adapting to virtual platforms/return to in-person learning, and persevering for the benefit of students and youth.

- Victor Ngo-Smith

CORRIDOR SPOTLIGHT: MISSISSIPPI AVE

CORRIDOR STATS

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

43

NUMBER OF TARGETED BUSINESSES

35

NUMBER OF SURVEYS

21

DEMOGRAPHICS*

95% Latino/a

33% Immigrant

38% Woman

38% are new businesses
(0-2 years)

MOST COMMON TYPES OF BUSINESSES

1. Restaurant (10)
2. Auto services (7)
3. Retail (6)

*of businesses surveyed

“

I had to close my business several times during the pandemic and because of that, I fell behind on rent and taxes. Now I work during the mornings in construction and in the afternoons at my business.

- West Denver business owner

“

We are trying to recover from the income that we lost last year, but recovery is very slow.

- West Denver business owner

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: MISSISSIPPI AVE

MARIBEL HERNANDEZ DE TREVIZO

TORTILLERIA COLORADO

2050 W MISSISSIPPI AVE, ATHMAR PARK

Maribel and her husband David opened their tortilla factory in 2003. David had always dreamed of opening his own business, and he was inspired by his mother, who used to sell tortillas out of their home in Mexico. At first they had a hard time establishing themselves, but Maribel convinced clients to try their tortillas, based on her mother's recipe, by giving them samples to take home. The strategy was a success, and they were able to grow their business through word of mouth and eventually expand into small grocery stores and carnicerías.

Maribel and David were able to purchase their store with the revenue that they earned. However, in 2014 David was diagnosed with cancer and they had to

slow production at the factory. David passed away in 2018.

Maribel has worked hard to maintain the store but has struggled to do so alone while caring for her children. David's dream was that their store could be a generational business that could be left to their children, but Maribel was on the point of closing down when she was connected to Mi Casa Resource Center through the WDSBC's outreach efforts. Mi Casa helped her apply for a grant of \$10,000 to support her business, which she was awarded. She plans to use the money to buy a new machine so that she can increase production, distribute to more stores, and advertise her business.

“

My business is very well-known, but it is difficult for me to maintain it with only my children. My husband always said that this business could be for our family and new generations.

- Maribel Hernandez de Trevizo



CORRIDOR SPOTLIGHT: **ALAMEDA AVE**

CORRIDOR STATS

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

84

NUMBER OF TARGETED BUSINESSES

69

NUMBER OF SURVEYS

16

DEMOGRAPHICS*

81% Latino/a

50% Immigrant

38% Women

100% have 0-9 employees

56% have been in business

11+ years

MOST COMMON TYPES OF BUSINESSES

1. Auto services (17)
2. Restaurant (14)
3. Financial and professional services (13)

NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE: **MI CASA RESOURCE CENTER**

Mi Casa Resource Center was founded in 1976 by eight west Denver parents who wanted to create a safe and supportive environment where women could complete their education and acquire new employment skills while their children received help and encouragement in school. Mi Casa expanded in the mid-1980s to include bilingual business development services to nurture the entrepreneurial spirit of low-income, female, and minority business owners.

Today, Mi Casa educates, trains, and supports youth and adults on their path to success in education, employment, and business ownership through nationally recognized programming for jobseekers, entrepreneurs, and youth.

Mi Casa provides wrap-around services to address potential barriers to success. They treat everyone as unique individuals, considering their strengths, challenges, and personal vision of success when helping them identify and achieve their goals.

In July 2017, Mi Casa moved its headquarters to Denver's Westwood neighborhood near the intersection of Federal Boulevard and Alameda Avenue, where they continue to serve as an important resource to the west Denver community.

**of businesses surveyed*

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: **ALAMEDA AVE**

INDELIZA PALACIOS

LONDON BEAUTY SALON

5145 W ALAMEDA AVE, BARNUM WEST

Indeliza has been a stylist for nearly twenty years. She and her husband bought the London Beauty Salon in 2017, with the goal of providing affordable and stylish hairstyles for men and women.

Indeliza wants to grow her business by offering facial treatments and massages, services that she says are usually unaffordable for her community. She wants to create a place in her community where beauty is accessible to everyone and where everyone feels welcome.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has put some of these plans on pause. Indeliza had to close her salon for two months during the pandemic. She struggled to pay rent while her business was closed and is now having a hard time finding enough stylists to staff the salon. She applied for financial assistance through a grant for minority businesses, but did not qualify.

As the owner, she has also had to teach herself how to be a manager. Indeliza is interested in classes that can help her grow her capacity as a manager and teach her how to expand her business in the future.



“

What I enjoy most about my job is that in my business I could spend all day in my salon and feel at peace.

It is very difficult to be the owner and a coworker. I am working to get better as a boss and a manager.

- Indeliza Palacios

CORRIDOR SPOTLIGHT: **WEST COLFAX**

CORRIDOR STATS

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

62

NUMBER OF TARGETED BUSINESSES

49

NUMBER OF SURVEYS

22

DEMOGRAPHICS*

50% Latino/a

27% Immigrant

41% White

14% AAPI

45% have been in business for 11+ years

MOST COMMON TYPES OF BUSINESSES

1. Auto services (17)
2. Restaurant (16)
3. Financial and professional services (6)

NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE: **WEST COLFAX BID**

The West Colfax Business Improvement District (WCBID) promotes business expansion, investment and development and works to recast West Colfax Avenue as Denver's sustainable Main Street. The BID offers its members and the neighborhood high impact programs and initiatives to stimulate commercial corridor and neighborhood revitalization.

The WCBID promotes sustainable redevelopment, provides support to businesses, helps to attract new businesses to the area, and sponsors public improvements that encourage pedestrian use and multi-modal transportation. WCBID works closely with new and existing businesses to ensure they have access to resources that benefit them and the corridor's revitalization.

The WCBID was able to work with many West Colfax businesses to share information about resources and funding that was available to support them during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other resources that the WCBID brings to West Colfax include incentives and rebates to increase business sustainability and small business financing assistance.

**of businesses surveyed*

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: **WEST COLFAX**

HUGO & NOEMY CHAVEZ

LOS MESONES RESTAURANT

3643 W COLFAX AVE, WEST COLFAX

Los Mesones is a true family business. Hugo and Noemy were neighbors as children in Aguascalientes, Mexico, but did not reconnect until years later, when Hugo moved to Denver and took a job at a bakery owned by Noemy's uncle. Hugo and Noemy come from generations of business owners, chefs, and bakers, so it felt natural to them to start a restaurant.

They opened Los Mesones Restaurant in 2007. Noemy's mother continues to make the mole, gorditas, and sopes and her father bakes the bread and pastries that they sell in the restaurant. They have relied on the help of their extended family to make the business a success - even their daughters' boyfriends help out.

Like many other restaurants, Los Mesones struggled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They were low on reserves when they reopened, but were able to work with the West Colfax BID to apply for a City grant that helped them pay the bills. Without that support, they would have had to close their business.

Los Mesones also counted on community support to stay afloat during the pandemic. They worked with the organization Feeding America to prepare meals for families in need and donated meals to a community arts organization in the Valverde neighborhood. Hugo and Noemy hope to continue the legacy of their parents by giving back to their community in all the ways they can.



“

We collaborate with community organizations, as many as we are able to support. I believe in what my mother taught me, that you will receive twice what you give, and you never know where help will come from. That helped us during the pandemic. We have been lucky that Dan was there to guide us and assist us in qualifying for the City grants.

- Hugo Chavez

CORRIDOR SPOTLIGHT: **DISPERSED BUSINESSES**

CORRIDOR STATS

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

464

NUMBER OF TARGETED BUSINESSES

160

NUMBER OF SURVEYS

24

DEMOGRAPHICS*

67% Latino/a

42% Immigrant

41% Woman

96% have 0-9 employees

42% have been in business for 11+ years

MOST COMMON TYPES OF BUSINESSES

1. Construction and building (115)
2. Industrial, manufacturing and wholesale (86)
3. Financial and professional services (79)

“

In general I believe legacy businesses are struggling because of gentrification and the demands for change being imposed by newcomers. This belief comes from conversations with BIPOC business owners.

- West Denver business owner

“

We have lost our customers due to rent and them moving out of this neighborhood, Barnum is getting too expensive to live or work here.

- West Denver business owner

“

Our children had to find jobs to help us with the bills, but we were able to make it through the COVID-19 pandemic.

- West Denver business owner

CORRIDOR SPOTLIGHT: **DISPERSED BUSINESSES**

GUILLERMINA ACOSTA

FIRST AVENUE NUTRITION

3456 W 1ST AVE, BARNUM

Guillermina was inspired to start First Avenue Nutrition by her own journey for a healthier, more balanced life. She says she felt unhealthy and unmotivated when she started attending a local nutrition club. Guillermina developed a friendship with the owners and began to take Zumba and exercise classes at the club, which helped her to feel more energized and active.

Encouraged by her friends, Guillermina decided to open First Avenue Nutrition to create a place with healthy, fresh food options, something she felt was missing in her community. At her store she makes fresh smoothies, energizing teas, and other healthy snacks. Guillermina opened her business just months before the onset of the COVID-19 and has been struggling to maintain it through the pandemic, especially as more people choose to work from home and there are fewer people passing through the area. She has taken on a second job so that she can keep her store open in the afternoons.

Eventually, Guillermina hopes to host yoga, Zumba, and other exercise classes in the front of her store. She says that although this time has been difficult, she will continue to put all of her energy into the success of her business.



“

I haven't lost my hope. I continue to put all of my energy into my business so that I can move forward and come out of this with a successful business.

- Guillermina Acosta