



CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

BUSINESS TASK FORCE MEETING

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 2:00 P.M.

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MEETING NOTES

I. Roll Call/Introductions

Business Task Force Members:

Present: Jonathan Cottrell, Jamison DeTrollo, Joshua Gafni, Leslie Haro, Austin Monroe, Michael Palmieri, Clementine Todorov

Absent: Kody Christiansen, Craig Susser

City of West Hollywood Staff:

Laura Biery, Paolo Kespradit, Laura D'Ambrosia, Adrienne Rosas, Jamaica Carter

West Hollywood Chamber Staff:

Nalani Santiago, Programs & Communications Manager

Members of the Public:

Rachel Lanphere, Craig's LA

II. Prior Meeting Follow-up (November 12, 2025)

November 12, 2025 meeting notes reviewed and filed.

III. Focus Area #2 – Create support and incentives for BIPOC-, Women-, LGBTQ+-, and City Resident-owned small businesses.

The Task Force received a presentation on the following topics:

- Overview of Targeted Small Business Communities:
 - BIPOC-owned businesses (self-reported business license data)
 - City resident-owned businesses operating as home occupations

Laura D'Ambrosia provided background information on targeted small business communities currently operating in West Hollywood, including businesses that have

voluntarily self-identified as BIPOC-owned, based on data pulled from the City's business license tax database (HDL).

Laura D'Ambrosia also provided a home occupation report from the City's business license tax database (HDL), reflecting current home occupations operating in the City and the associated business types. The search for the category of home occupation in the City's business tax database resulted in 450 active listings.

- Existing Small Business Support Efforts
 - Overview of current City-supported small business efforts, including partner-led training and business support

Nalani Santiago, Programs & Communications Manager with the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, presented on the WeLead Academy program, an initiative of the West Hollywood Small Business Foundation (WHSBF). As part of the City's prior efforts to support small business owners and entrepreneurs, the City partnered with WHSBF to implement initiatives serving individuals identifying as BIPOC, women, and LGBTQ+, consistent with City Council direction and the recommendations from the former Social Justice Task Force (now known as the Social Justice Advisory Board).

The academy was an 8-week program focused on leadership, financial skills, business growth, branding, collaboration, scaling, navigating government systems, and team building. The program included 17 graduates.

Participant feedback highlighted interest in extending the program length and incorporating additional learning components to support deeper engagement.

IV. Focus Area #2 Task Force Discussion

Joshua Gafni asked for more information regarding the Weho Loves Locals gift card program. The program was created to support local businesses through digital gift cards, bonus rewards, and exclusive resident offers.

Laura Biery provided the following information on the Weho Loves Locals gift card program:

- Over 2,425 gift cards purchased, totaling \$418,700.
- 56% redemption rate so far, with \$193,136 spent at local businesses.
- 88% of redeemed dollars went to restaurants and bars.

Local business marketing efforts from the City included mailers, text alerts, billboards, bus shelter ads, social media campaigns, and influencer marketing.

Interest was expressed in potentially incorporating optional demographic fields on the City's Business Tax Form to identify Women-owned and LGBTQ+-owned businesses, similar to the previously implemented BIPOC designation. Voluntary data collection was noted as a potential tool to support targeted outreach, data tracking, and alignment with the City's Strategic Plan and Economic Study goals.

V. Comments from Public

- No public comment provided.

VI. Next Steps & Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 3:10 p.m. via Zoom.