

**MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI
CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

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**MAYOR GARCETTI ANNOUNCES PROGRAM TO PROVIDE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
TRAINING TO ANGELENOS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

LA: EnterpRISE will provide career and financial literacy training and access to startup funding opportunities

LOS ANGELES — Mayor Eric Garcetti today announced the creation of LA: EnterpRISE, a pilot program to drive entrepreneurship opportunities for Angelenos experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.

“Every Angeleno should have a chance to nurture their talents, pursue their dreams, and earn an income,” said Mayor Garcetti. “The goal of LA: EnterpRISE is to empower people in need — to give them the support, training and encouragement they need to start a new chapter.”

LA: EnterpRISE is a public-private partnership with the Mayor’s Office of Economic Development, the Downtown Women’s Center, Target, the Mayor’s Fund for Los Angeles and PACE WorkSource/BusinessSource Centers. It will work with service providers and nonprofits to identify Angelenos experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness seeking to launch their own businesses, and provide them with thorough entrepreneurship training.

In its first year, LA: EnterpRISE aims to provide 200 Angelenos with a path to financial stability through self-employment, and lead participants to startup funding options. Participants will receive career and business training through workshops facilitated by the Mayor’s Office of Economic Development. Upon completion, participants will be referred to one of the City’s WorkSource Centers or BusinessSource Centers.

In addition to direct training, LA: EnterpRISE will expand its long-term training capacity with a yearlong train-the-trainer program facilitated by [FreeFrom](#), a gender-based violence survivor advocacy organization. In partnership with L.A.-based organizations [Coalition to Abolish Slavery](#)

[and Trafficking \(CAST\)](#) and [Safe Place for Youth \(SPY\)](#), FreeFrom will train facility case managers to serve as business startup coaches. Both organizations will receive \$5,000 in program support, which can be utilized for client business startup funding. In its first year, the initiative aims to train 15 case managers, who can then each provide dozens of clients with entrepreneurial skills training.

A 2017 pilot program by FreeFrom resulted in 24 new business starts — 100% of which turned a profit within the first month. With profits ranging from \$200-\$3,000 monthly, 33% of the founders transitioned from shelters into secure housing, based on income generated from new businesses. As part of the partnership with FreeFrom, Mayor Garcetti has named founder Sonya Passi to serve as his 2020 Entrepreneur-in-Residence, and design and implement the train-the-trainer program.

“It’s an honor and a joy to partner with Mayor Garcetti to expand the capacity of the City’s homeless shelters,” said FreeFrom founder and CEO, Sonya Passi. “Folks experiencing homelessness possess tremendous resilience, talent and creative potential that is rarely talked about. If their case managers are equipped with the tools and knowledge to support them in building income through small business creation and self-employment, then they can create their own pathways to financial security and long-term stability.”

About the Entrepreneur-in-Residence Program

First launched in 2014, the EIR program is made possible with support from Ernst & Young LLP and the Mayor’s Fund for Los Angeles. The program enlists business executives and expert entrepreneurs to work with the City to create exciting and powerful solutions that will lead to thoughtful policy, a burgeoning workforce, and a stronger economy.

About Sonya Passi

Sonya Passi is the founder and CEO of FreeFrom, a national organization empowering survivors of domestic violence to achieve economic justice and financial security. Sonya received her B.A. and M.Phil from the University of Cambridge and her J.D. from UC Berkeley School of Law. During law school, Sonya founded the Family Violence Appellate Project and changed the legal landscape in California by providing free appellate legal services to survivors of domestic violence. Prior to founding FreeFrom, Sonya worked at Morgan Stanley in New York City in the capital markets division. For her work in the field, Sonya was listed in Forbes’ 30 under 30 Class of 2017 for Law and Policy.

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