

## **Women Empowered (WE) Mentor Program**

The Women Empowered Mentor Program is an intentional recruiting and retention project for small, diverse and emerging businesses. The United Corpus Christi Chamber program will be under the direction of its Vice President for Small Business & Education and the Small, Diverse and Emerging Business Council partners. Resources, affiliates and partners for small businesses will be introduced at the event and will signal the beginning of the program year.

### **How WE Mentor Program positively benefits your small business membership?**

Participating small businesses and prospective small businesses will get exposure at the Women Empowerment Summit, initially learn about training, workshops, loan opportunities, and through registration application will have the opportunity for membership with the UCCCC, and to enroll in the small business mentoring empowerment program.

Selected small business members will be provided with a prescriptive plan of resources based on their individual small business needs' assessment. A plethora of services will be available, to include but not be limited to, online and in-person training and workshops on multiple pertinent topics for small business owners; current and timely funding and grants specific to small businesses from Texas Workforce Commission and City of Corpus Christi funding (i.e. training for small business employees on customer services, funding that defrays partial employees' wages, etc.), DBE, 8-A, HUB, & Women Owned Certifications, if applicable, to expand social media capabilities, on-line sales, access and assigning of mentors, and other resources.

The United Corpus Christi Chamber will utilize ChamberMaster to track attendance of participants at networking and training events, and business webpage development, referrals, and other metrics will be incorporated. My Chamber App and Chamber Plus mobile applications will be utilized. A team of successful small business champion volunteers will be recruited as peer mentors to assist. The goal of the program is to help the small businesses in the program increase business sales or build capacity, based on their needs. A pre-baseline and post evaluation of each of the selected business mentees' business financial standing will be requested but may not be feasible dependent on the level of trust developed with each small business participant.

Reports will be generated quarterly through ChamberMaster on a quarterly basis and person-to-person site visits will be made. Types of services used by each participant will be logged and networking opportunities, referrals made will be entered through ChamberMaster, when feasible. Small business owners will be empowered to share their success stories of what has worked for them and what they have learned through podcasts and social media. A long-term goal is to empower small business owners to champion peer-to-peer mentoring amongst the group from the first year of participants will be encouraged.

**Description of the long-term plan for the WE Mentoring Program, including current and anticipated partners.**

The plan is to launch the 12-month empowerment mentoring program on Saturday, March 23, the date of the Women Empowerment (WE) Summit. While training services will be available to chamber and community members, contingent on source availability, first come, first serve seating, virtual access, etc.), the mentor program will enroll a combination of 20 small businesses or prospective small business owners for tracking and reporting purposes that will be offered chamber small business membership (defined as a small business by having 0 to 5 employees/business). The timeline is as follows: Women Empowerment Summit – Mentor Program Launch, March 2019; Recruitment and Orientation/Chamber Membership, Needs Assessment March/April 2019; Training -LiftFund/SCORE May/June 2019 (online and in person 10 lessons), July/August 2019 Site Visits; Mid-Year Report, September/October 2019; Training Workshops (to be determined based on needs-promote webinars and availability or resources, Social Media, Webpage Development, Networking, Financial Literacy, Site Visits November 2019 Shop Small Campaign – December 2019 Holiday Markets Site Visits; January-February 2020; Assess Usefulness of Programming/Mentoring, Fine-Tune Plan, Workshops, etc. TBD, Final Report – Post Assessment Results - March 2020.

Online log-in tracking will be used and close collaboration with SCORE mentors, as well as Del Mar College Business Development Center and Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend, the Innovation Center of the Coastal Bend, the Small Business Administration and financial partners will be utilized to synchronize a tight-knit and non-redundant schedule of training and resources to best serve the small business participants.

Outcomes will be reported to Texas Workforce Commission. This project is funded by Texas Workforce Commission to Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend in partnership with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce.

Current and anticipated partners include LiftFund, SCORE, Del Mar College Development Center, Small Business Administration, Innovation Center of the Coastal Bend, SCORE, PTAC of Del Mar College, and other United Corpus Christi Chamber Members. In 2018, the United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce participated in the Governor's Women's Small Business Forum and anticipates participating again to share those resources with the mentees. The United Corpus Christi Chamber also holds a quarterly International Business Luncheon and is in frequent conversation with the Mexican Consul General and with the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber seeking to connect small businesses to international business, and access to other state contracting opportunities. The UCCCC is also a member of the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC), the United States Chamber of Commerce (USCC), the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) and the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE), all resources for UCCCC members.