

**Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy**  
**Assembly Select Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship**

**Economic Recovery of Women- and Minority-Owned Businesses**

*Wednesday, August 18, 2021, at 2:00 pm in the Assembly Chamber of the California State Capitol*

**Panelist Biographies**

**Eugene Cornelius, Jr.**, Senior Director, Center for Regional Economics and California Center, Milken Institute



Eugene Cornelius, Jr. is the [Center for Regional Economics](#) Senior Director responsible for federal, state and local small business policy coordination. Prior to his role here, he held a distinguished career in public service, most recently as Senior Advisor to the Office of International Trade, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). After successfully setting up and organizing the Office of International Trade at the U.S. Small Business Administration, Gene accepted a one-year detail to the International Council of Small Business (ICSB). He utilized his extensive international experience and executive leadership to design, develop, and deliver the ICSB Global program between the U.S. and ten allied countries. The Program also promotes the facilitation of trade between other countries' small businesses and the small businesses of the United States. As Deputy Associate Administrator for the Office of International Trade, Gene was responsible for administering the oversight and execution of four program divisions: (1) The Federal & State Trade Development Division, (2) The International Trade Finance Division, (3) The International Affairs & Trade Policy Division, (4) Administration & Operations. In addition to his agency

role, Gene served as an International consultant in the countries of Bahrain, Tunisia, and Jordan and twice in Egypt under the U.S. State Department Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) where he facilitated public private forums to streamline registration and regulations and zoning policies and expanded lending and non-financial services to small and medium sized enterprises. He previously served as the Deputy Associate Administrator for Office of Business and Economic Development where he provided senior leadership to over 42% of the Agency's budgeted workforce, ensuring the implementation of its overall goals, programs, and operations, covering all 50 states and U.S. territories.

Gene is a graduate of both the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma and Acquisition (Level 3) Senior Project Manager Program at American University and is nationally certified as an Associate in Risk Management (ARM). He holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a Master's degree in Public Administration and is a visiting Scholar at George Washington University. He was awarded the Harvard University School of Business "Bright Idea" for Innovation in American Government Award for the Business Builder economic development initiative.

## **Pat Fong, President & CEO, CalAsian Chamber of Commerce**



Pat is the President/CEO of the Sacramento Asian-Pacific Chamber of Commerce (SACC) serving in this capacity since 1998, and President/CEO of the California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce (CAPCC) formed in 2010. This combined entity represents the largest ethnic chamber in California today.

Pat is known as a visionary, entrepreneurial leader who has applied these skills to help build programs that strengthen California's ethnically diverse business community and create economic development opportunities for this community to prosper. Through her leadership, CAPCC has established two federal centers that help minority small businesses. The Sacramento Export Center, funded by the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency serving the southwest region, and the Small Business Transportation Resource Center funded by the Department of Transportation serving California, Arizona, Hawaii and Nevada.

Pat has established relationships that link the most prominent API business organization to opportunities that provide advocacy, education and outreach to a significant portion of this state's demographics, the over 600,000 Asian Pacific owned businesses in California. Through her efforts, the Chamber has developed partnerships throughout the State with over 53 community-based organizations. She created a separate Foundation to house each chamber's economic and workforce development, leadership, and education programs. Through this effort, the chamber won a significant contract with Covered California to sign up over 50,000 API businesses in California.

Pat's strength is forming collaborations with many community-based organizations on issues related to regional economic development to advance her community's interests. She has advocated on behalf of the chamber at the local, state and federal levels, and developed successful ongoing fund development programs to ensure chamber viability. Most recently, she formed the Sacramento Inclusive Development Collaborative (Sac IEDC), which is a group of regional chambers and local P-Bids that advocate for the diverse and underserved small business community in the Sacramento Region.

Pat firmly believes in giving back to her community and serves on numerous boards and commissions. Pat is a Senior Fellow, American Leadership Forum; Advisory Board Member, Sac State's Carlsen Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; Advisory Board Member, Sac State's College of Business Advisory Council; Board Member, Align Capital Region Board; and Member, Aggie Square Joint Advisory Board Committee.

Prior to her work in the non-profit arena, Pat worked in procurement management for major retail corporations for 15 years. Pat graduated from California State University, Sacramento in 1985 with a B.S. in Business Administration, concentration, Marketing, and a minor in Communications.

**Carmen Herrera-Mansir**, Executive Director, El Pájaro Community Development Corporation and host to the Regional Women's Business Center



Carmen Herrera-Mansir is the Executive Director for El Pájaro Community Development Corporation (El Pájaro CDC) a microenterprise development organization whose mission is to *"promote equal access to economic opportunity" and that provides services in Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito Counties.*

Ms. Herrera-Mansir started with El Pajaro CDC on April 2004. She has experience working in public administration and project management. Her experience in business management began early in life: she grew up working in, and eventually managing, her family's bakery in Mexico.

Under the leadership of Carmen Herrera-Mansir, El Pajaro CDC has become a leading practitioner of innovative and effective microenterprise development in the Central Coast region. The granddaughter of Bracero farmworkers and the daughter of a farmworker-turned-successful-entrepreneur, Herrera-Mansir has always been deeply drawn to creating opportunities for broader economic inclusion for underserved communities. Her family history provides her a unique perspective and an inspiration for El Pajaro CDC's success.

Under her tenure, El Pajaro CDC developed the EMPRESARI@ business Education Program, and expanded services from the Pajaro Valley in Santa Cruz to now covering Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito Counties. This has greatly increased the economic impact of the organization. In the past five years, they served over 2000 clients with technical assistance, training, and access to financing, many of them farm workers and rural communities. In 2013 they launched a Kitchen Incubator-- a shared use commercial kitchen that currently houses 35 food-based businesses. The Incubator is expanding to become a food cluster that includes an organic produce farming business, food hub and soon a small batch co-packing facility that will support food entrepreneurs looking to scale up and small farmers seeking to develop value-added products.

Recently, Herrera Mansir and her team launched a new microloan program and became an SBA Women's Business Center, thus building the entrepreneurial ecosystem that affects thousands of rural and urban micro and small business owners in the region.

Carmen is currently a board member of the California Association for Microenterprise Opportunity (CAMEO). She is also a board member for the Santa Cruz Workforce Development Board and participates in several economic development and recovery groups along the Monterey Bay region.

**Andy Madeira, Chief Operating Officer, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation**

Andy leads the organization in shaping its next phase of EBALDC's work in shaping healthy neighbourhoods.



Andy has over 30 years of experience in affordable housing and community development. Prior to joining EBALDC, Andy served as the Senior Vice President of Real Estate Development. Under his leadership, Eden Housing greatly expanded their new construction pre-development pipeline, recapitalized and renovated their existing portfolio, grew the organization's financial reserves and extended its impact by opening development offices in Monterey and San Diego, California.

In addition to his role at Eden Housing, Andy was a Senior Banker for JP Morgan Chase Community Development Banking. He also served as Vice President, Real Estate Development for Citizens Housing Corporation, and as a Director of Real Estate Development at BRIDGE Housing Corporation, and as a Vice President at Community Preservation and Development Corporation in Washington, DC.

Andy also has significant real estate lending and finance experience having spent six years at Fannie Mae's American Communities Fund, which financed affordable housing development, provided joint venture equity for workforce housing, and loans to local governments. Before his work in affordable housing, Andy practiced law at non-profit organizations in California and Philadelphia.

Andy continues to be active in community development, serving on the Board of Directors for Community Vision, and the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, to expanding our leadership and deepening our impact in building healthy neighbourhoods across Oakland and the East Bay.



### **Nicole McDonald, owner of S.T.E.A.M. Academy**



Nicole McDonald is an Educational Consultant and owner of S.T.E.A.M. Academy in Corona, CA. Ms. McDonald has partnered with school districts, colleges, and community organizations advocating for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) equity and access for all.

She has over 20 years of operational leadership experience in the high tech and pharmaceutical industries. Ms. McDonald earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Windsor in Windsor, Canada, and her MBA in Pharmaceutical Science and Marketing from St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia.

### **Monica Ochoa, owner of 1Day Cleaning**



Day Cleaning Services is a Latinx family-owned business. Despite the Pandemic, Monica Ochoa, after 15-years working for leading cleaning companies, along with her wife Vanessa and two of their children started their cleaning business together, 1 Day Cleaning Services. Through the many challenges of starting a new business and COVID, Monica and her staff have focused on their critical service of reducing the transmission of the deadly disease and satisfying their customers' needs every day. 1 Day Cleaning Services is honored to serve many well-known companies such as Greystar, Wood Residential, California Landmark Group, Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter, STYL Residential, Catalina Funding, and the Doumanian Law Firm. 1 Day Cleaning Services differentiates itself in its work ethics, experience, employee support, and management, which is reflected in its fast growth and customer satisfaction.

**Nancy Swift**, Executive Director, Jefferson Economic Development Institute and Chair of California Women's Business Center Network



Ms. Swift is a staunch champion of entrepreneurs worldwide. With 30 years of experience in micro and small business development, local wealth creation and community economic development, Ms. Swift is the Founding Director of Jefferson Economic Development Institute (JEDI), a pioneer program in rural far northern California celebrating its 24<sup>th</sup> year of serving rural entrepreneurs. JEDI is dedicated to increasing the economic well-being of people and communities through business development and local wealth creation.

Over the years, Ms. Swift has developed a keen interest in women entrepreneurs and has committed much of her professional life to advancing women's economic opportunities. JEDI was designated a host for the US Small Business Administration Women's Business Center in September 2014 which brings new resources and inspiration for rural women entrepreneurs and an expanded territory for service.

Ms. Swift has also consulted with the Kazakstan Community Loan Fund in Central Asia and is a strong advocate for asset and microenterprise development locally, nationally and internationally. She served full 7-year terms each on the boards of the California Association for Microenterprise Opportunity (CAMEO) and the national Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO). In her home community, Ms. Swift serves on the City of Mt. Shasta's Community Economic Development Advisory Committee and the countywide Community Services Council, and the Mt. Shasta Union School District Board.