

Hayward, CA – Promise Entrepreneurship Initiative

Location: Hayward, CA

Venue: California State University East Bay

Intro to the City, Distinctive Aspects and Demographics:

Hayward, situated in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area, lies just half an hour from Silicon Valley. Known for its vibrant community and historical transformation from agricultural roots to suburban dynamism, the city has approximately 160,000 residents. As California's second-most diverse city, Hayward offers a distinctive blend of residential, commercial, and industrial areas, making it a compelling place to live and work.

Distinctive Aspects and Demographics - Hayward's cultural richness stems from its diverse population: approximately 40% Hispanic or Latino, 30% Asian, and 10% African American. This blend gives rise to a vibrant community celebrated through various cultural festivals, such as the Bay Area's largest Hawaiian cultural event, the May Day Festival. Hayward is also a hub for higher education, housing California State University, East Bay (CSU East Bay), which serves 14,000 students and injects youthful energy into the city. With 40% of the population foreign-born, Hayward's multicultural identity is reflected in its businesses, neighborhoods, and community life, creating an inclusive and dynamic environment.

Overview of the Local Economy - Regional Assets: Hayward's strategic location in the Bay Area provides easy access to major highways, airports, and the Port of Oakland, the eighth-busiest container port in the U.S. Proximity to Silicon Valley connects Hayward to high-tech industries, while its economy thrives on manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and logistics. Clean energy and tech startups are growing in prominence, highlighted by Hayward becoming the headquarters for Eikon Therapeutics, a healthcare innovator founded by Nobel Prize winners.

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Hayward supports small businesses and startups through local incubators, mentorship programs, and partnerships with institutions like CSU East Bay. The Hayward Business and Economic Development Division offers resources to foster entrepreneurship, although equitable access for underserved communities remains challenging.

The Poverty and Disadvantage Challenge in Hayward

Despite a median household income of \$105,000, about 10% of Hayward's population lives in poverty. The Hayward Promise Neighborhoods' 2021 COVID Community Survey revealed that 61% of South Hayward families reported food insecurity as their primary concern. High housing costs and limited low-income job opportunities exacerbate these challenges, highlighting the economic disparities within the city despite its proximity to Silicon Valley's affluence.



Introduction to the Poverty and Entrepreneurship Program

Who We Are Serving - The Promise Entrepreneurship Initiative (PEI) empowers low-income residents in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods. The program prioritizes underserved communities, including youth, minorities, and women, who often face economic hardship and lack traditional business resources. The initiative helps families build sustainable businesses by providing tailored support, fostering economic mobility and transforming neighborhoods into resilient, opportunity-rich communities. Currently, 40% of firms in Hayward are minority-owned, and 15% are women-owned, reflecting the city's entrepreneurial potential.

California State University, East Bay Partnership - This initiative represents a collaboration between CSU East Bay's College of Business and the federally funded Hayward Promise Neighborhoods program. CSU East Bay contributes academic expertise, research, and mentoring, while Hayward Promise Neighborhoods provides community outreach and engagement. The program's governance includes leaders from CSU East Bay, local government, businesses, and community organizations to ensure responsiveness to local needs.

Annual Cycle - The program opens applications in the fall and launches in September with workshops and mentorship opportunities. Over the year, participants receive training, networking support, and funding resources, culminating in August with business plan presentations.

Unique Aspects of the Approach - The initiative uniquely integrates CSU East Bay's academic expertise with community-based mentorship, combining education with practical, real-world support. Cultural competency ensures resources are tailored to the specific needs of underserved communities. By leveraging city assets, such as libraries and workforce programs, the initiative provides tools and connections for participants to build successful ventures. The program also prioritizes data collection to inform evidence-based policies for effective poverty interventions.

Future Goals - The Promise Entrepreneurship Initiative aspires to expand its reach across the Bay Area, empowering more potential entrepreneurs and fostering a self-sustaining small business ecosystem. The program aims to set a national example of collaboration between higher education, local government, and community organizations by revitalizing underserved neighborhoods and addressing economic inequality through entrepreneurship.

