



NEWS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, January 19, 2023

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CITY OF STOCKTON TO RECEIVE 2023 AUDREY NELSON AWARD FOR PROGRAMMING TO SUPPORT FOOD ENTREPRENEURS IN STOCKTON

STOCKTON, Calif. – The City of Stockton will receive the 2023 Audrey Nelson Award from the National Community Development Association (NCDA) for supporting the Stockton Community Kitchen. The City will be recognized at the NCDA's winter conference on January 27, 2023.

The Stockton Community Kitchen Incubator, which opened in January 2020 at 110 N. El Dorado St., helps underserved women food entrepreneurs. Their mission is to provide services to entrepreneurs facing the highest barriers to entry into the food industry. The program is woman-driven and serves to elevate women, providing the opportunity of a hand-up to talented women by connecting them with the resources and training to succeed in the food industry.

The 23,535 square feet restaurant and event space includes a spacious commercial kitchen and an International Food Hub. Program participants receive culinary training and technical assistance to help them formalize and grow their businesses. Participants use the commercial kitchen to grow their business, and the International Food Hub gives program participants a physical space to sell their products to customers.

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“The Stockton Community Kitchen is a local non-profit that provides mentorship to gain the necessary skills, business expertise and support for food enthusiasts,” shares Rima Barkett, Director of the Stockton Community Kitchen. “We are dedicated to providing under-resourced populations an opportunity to gain a unique experience, transferable skills, business education and access to entrepreneurial resources within food service. We believe that with the right resources, talent and passion we can cultivate entrepreneurs whose food businesses benefit themselves, their families, our community and our city! We are grateful for the City of Stockton because without their support this project could not have become the success it has become!”

The Stockton Community Kitchen is a collaborative effort between public and private entities, including the City of Stockton, A Tavola Together, La Cocina, the Hispanic Chamber of San Joaquin County, San Joaquin Delta College Culinary Program, and Stockton Unified School District School for Adults. Each organization plays a role in either creating curriculum and training, placing program participants, or identifying and leveraging funding opportunities.

The City’s \$190,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program investment over multiple years is the glue that gave the project momentum. The City’s grant fueled additional investments from the California Hispanic Chamber, San Joaquin Hispanic Chamber, San Joaquin County WorkNet, the Housing Authority of San Joaquin County, SBA, and local foundations, with a total investment of more than \$1.1 million.

The Stockton Community Kitchen honors California's Central Valley with its diversity, creativity, and rich agricultural resources. It simultaneously creates more equitable

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economic development opportunities, addresses food deserts, and creates new career pathways for food women entrepreneurs in Stockton.

“This recognition is validation that our Economic Strategic Action Plan is working, and Stockton is becoming the best City in America to live, raise a family, and grow a business” said Carrie Wright, City of Stockton Economic Development Director.

For more information about City of Stockton Economic Development programs and services and a link to the plan, please visit www.stocktonca.gov/EDD or call (209) 937-8539.

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