



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE VALLEY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE COMMEMORATES NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK WITH  
EXPERT-DRIVEN COMMUNITY DISCOURSES**

**Sherman Oaks, California** – [The Valley Economic Alliance](https://www.thevalley.net) is pleased to announce its slate of virtual economic development events prior to National Small Business Week, which is observed from May 1 to May 7. Throughout the month of May, The Alliance’s free programming will promote the latest perspectives on real estate development, multicultural collaboration, and talent development for the local workforce. While many San Fernando Valley corporations are beginning to regain financial traction from springtime contracts and new, thriving relationships with investors, The Alliance remains focused on enhancing the influence of the Valley’s small business community while accentuating their points of pride and increasing their access to mindful resources.

“The impact of our entrepreneurs cannot be ignored because so much of the San Fernando Valley workforce is employed by small businesses,” said Sonya Kay Blake, President and CEO of The Alliance. “To increase the competitiveness of these businesses after spending two years in a distressed state, The Alliance will host impactful events in May targeting owners who are still in recovery mode, yet searching for resourceful specialists who could point them in the right direction throughout the year.” The community is invited to participate in a series of curated discussions– which will include commentary from some of our region’s most authoritative minds in government, housing, education, and finance– for purposeful solutions to plaguing problems.

Discussions scheduled to take place during the month are as follows:

**Economic Development Committee Meeting | “Spotlight on the City of Burbank”**

Thursday, May 5, 2022 | 10:00 am - 11:00 am (PST) | Videoconference via Zoom

The May installment of The Alliance’s Economic Development Committee Meeting will feature speaker Mary Hamzoian, Economic Development Manager for the City of Burbank, as she spotlights critical real estate development ventures slated to transform the landscape of the City. Known for its famed production studios– including Warner Bros. Studios, Walt Disney Studios, and Nickelodeon Studios– she will also outline programs and resources designed to help business owners increase their revenue and generate additional funding sources. This event is also co-sponsored by the *San Fernando Valley Business Journal*. Though complimentary, confirmation of attendance is mandatory by registering online at [TheValley.net/events](https://www.thevalley.net/events).

**Education & Workforce Development Committee | “Talent Development Strategies for the San Fernando Valley Region”**

Wednesday, May 11, 2022 | 9:00 am - 10:00 am (PST) | Videoconference via Zoom

Three of the San Fernando Valley’s most respected experts on our educational system will convene in a conversation focused on talent development strategies for our local workforce, along with the release of the *Workforce of the Future Industry Leadership Directory*. Valley residents interested in learning more about tax incentives earmarked for employee benefits should also consider attending this virtual meeting, which is free and open to the public. Guest speakers include the following:



Dr. Barry Gribbons- President, Los Angeles Valley College  
Donna Farrugia- President, Equis Staffing  
Mark Wilbur- President and CEO, EverythingHR

Online registration for this event, which is co-sponsored by the *San Fernando Valley Business Journal*, is required at [TheValley.net/events](https://TheValley.net/events).

**Diverse Business Huddle | “Closing the Wealth Gap”**

Tuesday, May 17, 2022 | 11:00 am - 11:30 am (PST) | Videoconference via Zoom

Leaders representing The Alliance’s Adelante Latin Hub, Ellevate Women’s Hub, and Onyx African American Hub invite local business owners to take advantage of this free, open office hour period to reach out, ask questions, and propose suggestions regarding business growth strategies. Participants are encouraged to discuss any professional challenges with the group in hopes of establishing sound suggestions that can be applied to pertinent entrepreneurial pursuits or daily operations. Register now at [TheValley.net/events](https://TheValley.net/events).

**Livable & Sustainable Communities Committee | “Housing & Revitalization”**

Thursday, May 19, 2022 | 10:00 am - 11:00 am (PST) | Videoconference via Zoom

Residents of the San Fernando Valley know that housing options are at a premium, and workforce housing is still in its infancy phase. How should the community address the housing and sustainability crisis moving forward? Join Sonya Kay Blake, President and CEO of The Valley Economic Alliance, as she presents a discourse on the state of housing and revitalization in the San Fernando Valley. Topics addressed will include the evolution of land use in the Valley, opportunity zones, and SB-15 incentives for rezoning idle retail sites, which are ripe with economic opportunity and potential employment opportunities. California State Senator Anthony Portantino (25th State District) will share his insights on the state of affairs, along with Mark Polhemus, Plant-Based Business and Economic Development Specialist for CA GO-Biz. The *San Fernando Valley Business Journal* will serve as a co-sponsor, and registration is available at [TheValley.net/events](https://TheValley.net/events).

For over 50 years, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has celebrated National Small Business Week to acknowledge the overwhelming contributions of business owners who manage to uplift their local economies and provide for their families despite continuous setbacks, financial constraints, and daily threats of closures. The Alliance exists to provide a solid informational support system for local business owners in need of a helping hand and advocate for distressed businesses seeking a lifeline. For more information on how you can support The Alliance’s events in honor of National Small Business Week and beyond, please call (818) 379-7000 or visit [www.thevalley.net](http://www.thevalley.net).

*The Valley Economic Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization comprised of business, government, education, and community leaders. Our mission is to engage and unite Valley stakeholders to raise standards of living and economic vitality across the San Fernando Valley, a five-city region encompassing Burbank, Calabasas, Glendale, Los Angeles, and San Fernando. This region consists of more than 1.9 million residents, over 160,000 businesses and covering more than 350 square miles. To learn more about The Valley Economic Alliance, visit [www.TheValley.net](http://www.TheValley.net).*

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