

Changing the Face of Business

2020 Report to Donors

WEV's COVID-19 Response Helped Elly Iverson Cope with the Pandemic



Elly Iverson
Owner of eji experiences

When 2020 started, Ellyette "Elly" Iverson was enthusiastic about the year ahead for her growing event management business, eji experiences. "I was in a position where I was really excited to take on more big projects like festivals," remembers Elly. "I had just finished doing the entire VIP program for the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, and I was looking to be a more critical player in large events both in and outside of Santa Barbara." Then COVID-19 hit.

A 2019 SET graduate, Elly reached out to WEV for a Quick Response Loan as well as support in putting together her PPP application. "The impact of getting the loan was huge for me," Elly shared. "Living in Santa Barbara is not cheap. It was scary when I literally had my entire year of income disappear in less than a week. Having some cash on hand early on in the pandemic not only helped me feel less terrified, it also allowed me to get the equipment I needed to transition to virtual and hybrid events. I was able to get a camera that works really well, lighting and sound, and a computer that doesn't break down when I try to download large files. Those all ended up being critical for me to be able to pivot my business. There's no way I could have done it without the loan."

Elly was diligent in participating in WEV's COVID-19 advisory services including the weekly webinars and meet ups offered to help business owners during the pandemic. "In the beginning when I didn't have any work, I told myself I needed to be learning as much as I could. There was so much I couldn't control but I could go into these webinars and learn something new and feel the connection with other business owners. That was really comforting and helpful."

The webinars were also an opportunity for Elly to volunteer with WEV as she put together her own presentation. By sharing her expertise on virtual business/events, she helped fellow entrepreneurs understand how they could coordinate, organize and manage their own events.

During the summer, Elly decided to join Thrive to receive ongoing support during the pandemic. "Being a Thrive client was invaluable in so many ways. Just having the resources to have a touch point with different consultants for different business questions I had was huge. Being paired with Jeff Alkazian as my Thrive coach was amazing because he really understood what I was trying to do. I think one of the biggest things for small business owner during the pandemic is you just want to crawl under a rock because it's so all just so overwhelming. But at my bi-monthly meetings with Jeff he would remind me that I was doing okay and I would make it through if I just kept moving forward. You can't just stop. He helped me to keep doing the little things and to set manageable goals so I could see I was making progress."

"As I switched to entirely virtual events, I was learning as I went and a huge part of working with Jeff was helping me to understand my worth. As a new business owner, and as a young woman trying to create a space for myself, it's very hard to say, 'This is my value and you must pay me my value.' So, to have him constantly encouraging me and telling me, 'No, no, no, you're worth more than that. Yes, you only have six months experience but that's six months more than most of the people who are trying to do this right now.'"

Having an event management business during a pandemic is certainly challenging so Elly is taking it week by week, or even just day by day. "It's encouraging that I have multiple clients that I've been working with that have been very happy with the success of their virtual events," says Elly. "I have retainer clients that have increased my responsibilities so my business is growing."

Elly's WEV connection continues to support her business as she is working with other WEV clients who have hired her to help them with virtual hosting experiences as well as looking for ways to create safe pop up spaces for holiday retail opportunities.

"Members of the WEV community and other small business owners are working together to support each other while we help market the different things that are happening safely in our community," said Elly. "It's a challenge to be safe while also being creative and trying to keep the excitement while the rules are constantly changing but we are trying to make it happen."

With your support, WEV continues to evaluate and adapt our programs to make sure we are meeting the needs of clients like Elly as they face the unprecedented challenges caused by COVID-19.



COVID has been difficult for the Events Industry but WEV's programs have helped Elly pivot and adjust.

Donors Making a Difference

Susan Bower. A Tribute to an Extraordinary Woman

by Marsha Bailey, WEV Founder and CEO Emerita

This year our community lost one of our most generous and progressive donors, Susan Bower, who passed away in July. I first met Susan through the Fund for Santa Barbara. She had a donor-advised fund called the Single Parent Fund. Over half of WEV's early clients were single mothers or single heads of households. For several years running, Susan approved grants of \$10,000 to \$14,000 every June. Those grants got WEV through the summer and gave me peace of mind, knowing we wouldn't run out of money if I took a vacation.

Susan took a risk by supporting WEV when our founding concept was as yet unproven: the idea that we could improve women's economic status by helping them start and grow their own businesses. Susan took that risk because she understood and empathized with the obstacles and challenges our clients faced. Without her early support, it's unlikely WEV would have survived.



Marsha Bailey with Susan Bower (right) and her daughter Melissa (left).



Susan Bower
Philanthropist and Friend

Susan continued to support WEV throughout her life, and I was privileged to get to know her personally and call her my friend. Once we had lunch together at a tiny table in a WEV client's commercial kitchen, but more often, we sat in her living room enjoying a cup of tea or a glass of white wine in the late afternoon. We discussed art and travel and textiles and pottery—all interests we shared—and also, of course, politics. But in the end, Susan always wanted to know how WEV was doing and marveled at our growth and impact.

There is nothing I can say to adequately express the depth of my gratitude to Susan for her friendship and for her generous and loyal support. She was a quiet, unassuming woman whose impact on WEV and our community is immeasurable; a model of generosity and community involvement for us all.



Devyn Duex
VP-Financial Advisor,
and shareholder

Meet Devyn Duex: A League of Extraordinary Women Member

For years, Devyn Duex was aware of WEV through her many entrepreneur friends who attended WEV programs or received WEV funding. However, she wasn't motivated to join WEV's League of Extraordinary Women until after attending the 2019 Empowerment is Priceless breakfast. "The breakfast was when I saw the deep impact and value of WEV. Story after story of the businesses that were started after training, support, mentorship and networking provided by WEV. Businesses not only created but also thriving! It called to my heart. I knew I needed to be a part of it in a bigger way."

Devyn was excited to join the League because she viewed it as an opportunity to give back. "As a League member, I can share the mentorship and training I have learned along the way. It's a chance to lift others up, and to network. We all need encouragement, a sounding board, a safe place to express our ideas, and an ability to learn how to fail, because failure is just an opportunity to learn and grow. It's cheesy but we really can do this together... and it's just way more fun!"

Devyn currently serves as a vice president, financial advisor at CAPTRUST, one of the largest independent retirement plan and investment advisory firms in the United States. A lifetime performer, she is also the founder and creator of Nebula Dance Lab, a professional dance company that provides dance arts to Santa Barbara through performances, an outreach program, and training opportunities.

A big supporter of small businesses in Santa Barbara, Devyn reminds us that now, more than ever, these businesses need our patronage. "I do what I can by shopping locally as much as possible, buying gift cards, and getting take out. I think we all need to remember to support local."

When asked about her advice to entrepreneurs, Devyn said, "If you have an idea calling to your heart, go for it. WEV can provide you the support and networking to think your idea through and bring it to life. Take risks, without risks you cannot fail, and without failure you cannot grow. It's how you move through those failures that defines you. Pick yourself up and move forward with passion and conviction. Also, find the right people to surround yourself with... Oh hey, guess what you've already done that with WEV. Don't be afraid to call upon the WEV network."



At the 2019 EIP Breakfast where she joined the League, Devyn Duex (left) with Rachil Vincent (center) and Colette Nottage Crafton (right).

WEV Programs Help Businesses Grow



Juliana Ramirez
Founder & President of
JR Bookkeeping Services

WEV Support Helps JR Bookkeeping Grow

Throughout her life, Juliana Ramirez hadn't really thought about being an entrepreneur. When an employer suggested she should start her own business, it sparked the idea in her mind. When Juliana and her husband both lost their jobs, the need to make money pushed her to take action.

"We had two brand-new babies and we obviously needed to feed them," Juliana recalled. "I had to find a way to be at home while still making money and the way I found was starting a bookkeeping business."

Four months in, her new business had 11 clients when she discovered WEV and started the Smart Entrepreneurial Training (SET) class. "In my SET class, I learned all the basics of how to start your own business and how to make it grow. I learned about not just being self-employed but creating your own business. Every time I would go to class, I would apply what I learned and it would start working. By the end of the 14-week course, I had 28 clients.

"One of the things that stuck with me was when the instructor asked us if we wanted to have a job or a business. She described the difference

between the two and I decided I wanted a business. Now, eight years later, I can say that that is something we've been able to build."

After graduating from SET, Juliana participated in WEV's Thrive consulting program for three years. "Being in Thrive helped me stay on track as I implemented the business plan I had completed in SET. It also helped keep me accountable for what I said I was going to do. I confronted many of my fears while in that program and I was able to overcome the challenges I faced as I continued to improve and grow my business."

In 2018, Juliana's husband had an accident at work resulting in a fractured back that left him unable to move. "That was a very difficult time because I needed to be away from work. I was so happy to see that I had a business that did not collapse because I had to step away. It was so satisfying to be able to take the time I needed to be with my husband. That proved to me that I had built a business that could continue providing not just for my family but for my employees too."



The Cid-Ramirez Family

JR Bookkeeping has grown to a team of eight, and Juliana takes pride in empowering other women and helping them have careers they enjoy. One of those women has been her sister, Natalia, who's now the Operations Manager at JRB and has been right by her side supporting and helping to establish, develop and grow the business since the beginning. Juliana is also sharing her success by giving back as a member of WEV's League of Extraordinary Women and volunteering in WEV's classroom.

Thanks to our 2020 Sponsors

PASSION LEVEL



EMPOWERMENT LEVEL

- American Riviera Bank
- Bank of America
- Coast General Insurance Brokers
- JPMorgan Chase & Co.
- County of Ventura
- La Arcada Investment Corporation
- Montecito Bank & Trust
- Pacific Western Bank
- Ventura County Credit Union

THRIVING LEVEL

- BanksCoaching
- Boone Graphics
- California Statewide CDC
- Noozhawk
- Seasons Catering

WEV is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating an equitable and just society through the economic empowerment of women. WEV provides a continuum of comprehensive services – loans, training, and advisory – to support entrepreneurs to start, grow and thrive in business.

Over the past 3 decades, more than 4,500 business owners have participated in WEV's lending, training, and advisory programs. While our mission remains constant, WEV's offerings have evolved over the years to meet the changing needs of the community. In 2018, after the Thomas, Hill and Woolsey fires, WEV added recovery grants and financial education programs to help businesses become more resilient and prepared for unexpected disruptions.

This year, WEV has responded to a dramatic increase in demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have adjusted our existing programs and developed new ones to help businesses face the unique challenges of this crisis. We quickly moved our in-person training courses online, developed a series of weekly webinars on disaster-specific topics, and provided targeted individual advisory support, all free of charge.

Our COVID-19 Quick Response Loan (QRL) Program, offered low-interest, no-fee emergency financial support to businesses experiencing economic hardship and provided a bridge to SBA disaster funding.

Interviews with over 800 WEV clients, 12-18 months post service, indicate the following outcomes:

Business Performance

- 45% of pre-business clients start a business
- 94% business survival rate
- Two-thirds of business owners are taking an owner's draw

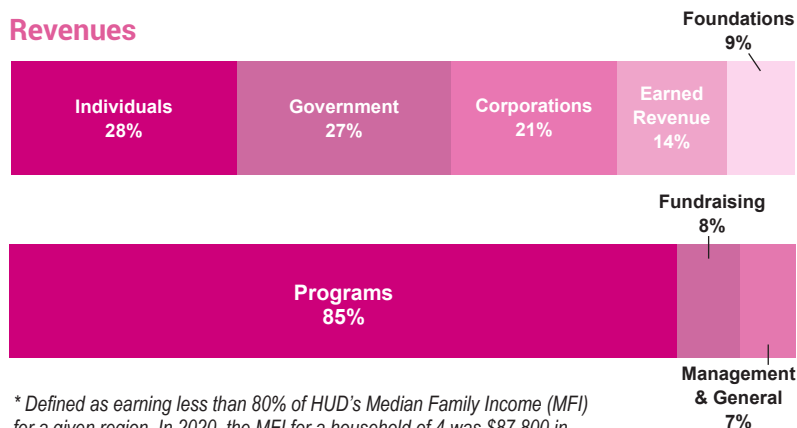
Community Economic Impact

- WEV-assisted businesses employ 2 workers on average in addition to the business owner
- 3,030 jobs have been created or retained in the past 5 years
- In the past 5 years, WEV-assisted businesses have generated an estimated \$13 million in state and local tax revenues.

Personal Economic Impact

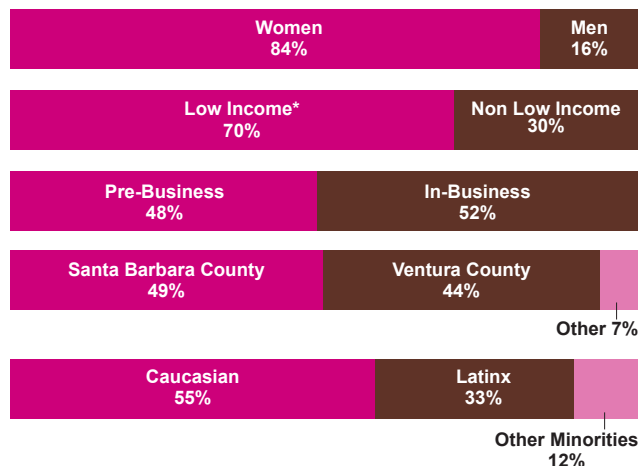
- 58% of all clients have increased their household income
- 84% of WEV clients in poverty at intake have moved out of poverty
- 68% drop in unemployment among clients between intake and survey

Revenues



* Defined as earning less than 80% of HUD's Median Family Income (MFI) for a given region. In 2020, the MFI for a household of 4 was \$87,800 in Santa Barbara County and \$97,800 in Ventura County.

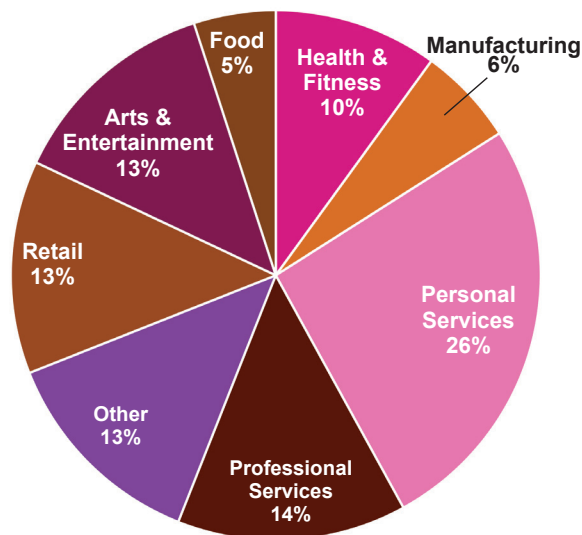
A Snapshot of Our Clients



WEV Services 2020

# of Clients	Services Provided
163	Training Services 3,256 hours of business and financial training
322	Advisory Services 1,775 hours of long and short-term business and financial consulting.
236	Businesses Assisted
708	Jobs Supported
74	Loans 74 loans totaling \$912,500 . 67 of these loans, totaling \$527,500 , were emergency loans to local small businesses to help them get through the COVID crisis.

Types of Businesses Served



Santa Barbara County
333 S. Salinas Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93103
(805) 965-6073

Ventura County
290 Maple Court, Suite 268
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 667-8004