

20 25

ANNUAL REPORT



**AT THE INTERSECTION OF
CULTURE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

THE FOUNDATION OF LITTLE VILLAGE



WHO WE ARE

We provide culturally appropriate programming, bilingual resources, workforce training, and access to capital for current and emerging entrepreneurs who invest in our community.



MISSION

Our mission is to support and encourage business growth through entrepreneurial opportunities impacting the economic wellness of our community.



VISION

Our vision is to be the catalyst for economic equality, prosperity, and advancement of Little Village and beyond.

Letter from our Board President & Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The Foundation of Little Village is proud to share yet another successful year serving Chicago's entrepreneurs and small businesses. We leveraged the momentum gained in 2024 with unprecedented programmatic expansion to create a deeper and more meaningful engagement with our constituents.

In 2025, we deepened our commitment to entrepreneurial success by expanding services that provide a more holistic experience centered around supporting individuals from the spark of an idea through the realities of building a thriving business. We know that between inspiration and sustainability lies a journey filled with challenges, milestones, and critical decisions. In response, we evolved our Community Wealth Building pillar to strengthen individualized support, mentorship, and practical guidance. This intentional approach has led to increased reengagement, with more entrepreneurs returning to access multiple service areas, which is an encouraging reflection of the trust they place in our programming.

This work builds on what the Foundation of Little Village has long understood: bilingual and culturally relevant services are essential to entrepreneurial success. Through the Xquina

Business Ecosystem and our growing partnerships across Chicagoland, we continue to expand this community-centered approach connecting our entrepreneurs to the resources, relationships, and opportunities they need to thrive.

As we expand services and deepen our engagement, the Board of Directors has set the strategic direction for the Foundation's next phase. Throughout the year, Board members participated in planning sessions to assess community needs, evaluate organizational impact, and identify priorities for growth and sustainability. This dedicated work culminated in the approval of our updated three-year Strategic Plan launching in 2026.

This progress is made possible by the generosity of our donors, the leadership of our community champions, and the dedication of partners who believe in the power of entrepreneurship to transform lives. We are deeply grateful to be on this journey together as we create stronger pathways for our entrepreneurs to access the relationships, resources, and opportunities that strengthen communities and expand economic opportunity in Little Village and beyond.



Dan Arce | Board President
Foundation of Little Village



Kim Close | Executive Director
Foundation of Little Village

Core Values

Inspiration

We believe in making dreams come true by energizing the spirit and potential of our entrepreneurial community.

Innovation

We are committed to developing a culture of innovation that creates enduring value for our community.

Respect

We celebrate the diversity of visions, perspectives, and culture of our entrepreneurs, stakeholders, and community.

Courage

With courage and vision, we challenge the status quo to create a culturally relevant business environment.

Integrity

Maintaining the highest ethical standards, transparency, and collaboration are key elements to paving the way to change.

2025 IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



331 Total Clients Served



758 Business Counseling & Coaching Sessions



157 New Businesses Established



46 Specialized Referrals



\$21,400 In-House Micro-Grants Distributed



22 Businesses Accessed Direct Capital



\$73,000 In-House Micro-Loans Distributed

Workshops and Webinars



29 Digital Webinars



12 In-person Workshops

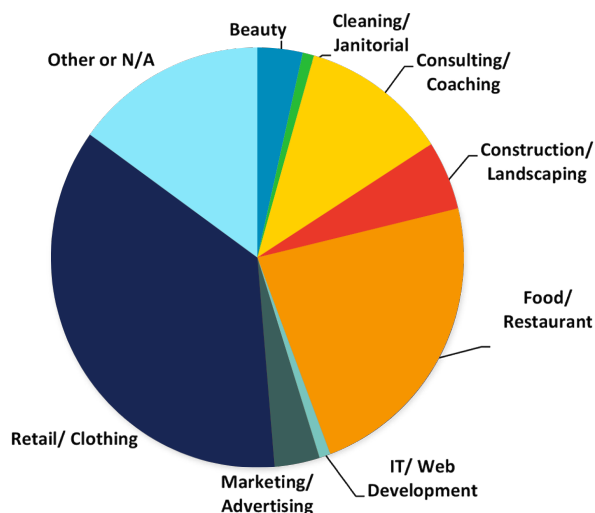


24 Partnerships & Collaborations



882 Combined Attendance

JUNTOS Snapshot



- **89%** of participants are female
- **80%** of participants currently own or run a small business
- **78%** of participants prefer Spanish over English
- **36%** of participants have a retail or clothing business
- **25%** of all participants accessed capital investment
- The average age of participants is **42 years old**
- Our graduation rate is **85%**, an increase of **15%** from 2024

Overall Impact Since 2018



2,134
Local entrepreneurs have been served across all program and service areas



\$893,490
In micro-grants & loans have been distributed to 305 local small businesses



445
Entrepreneurs have participated in at least one Juntos Entrepreneurial Class



33
Multi-week educational cohorts have taken place since Juntos programming began

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

Building community wealth through small business ownership allows families, young people, and entrepreneurs alike to feel empowered in their own economic mobility. To nurture the greatest success, the Foundation of Little Village focuses this pillar on a multi-pronged approach that meets each businesses' needs wherever they are in their entrepreneurial journey.

Economic Empowerment Center

We expanded our Spanish-language ecosystem referrals to enhance our one-on-one business advice and technical assistance.

Business Finance Resources

We officially launched in-house micro-lending in addition to our one-on-one financial literacy, creating yet another pathway to capital.

Juntos Entrepreneurial Classes

Our new primary instructor revamped our curriculums to be more engaging and culturally relevant for the changing times.

Entrepreneurial Workshops & Webinars

Focused on current trends and specific needs, our workshops and webinars have become a staple, offering expert-led programming.

Fiscal Sponsor Services

Businesses now have access to a wider range of grant opportunities with the help of this service.

Chicago's First Spanish Pitch Contest

Small business and entrepreneur-focused events were among the many highlights of 2025, bringing together the Little Village and Chicagoland business communities to foster networking, collaboration, resource sharing, and deeper ecosystem engagement.



One standout moment was a Chicago first: a fully Spanish-language pitch competition. In partnership with Sunshine Enterprises, ten finalists actively engaged in two months of intensive one-on-one coaching, refining their business plans, crafting compelling visual stories, and strengthening their pitches in preparation for the competition. We are grateful to our judges and community partners for helping make this groundbreaking event a success. We extend our enthusiastic congratulations to the participants and winners who brought their vision, dedication, and entrepreneurial spirit to the stage.



Aori Botanical

Won a grand prize of \$5,000



Sandry's Coffee

Won \$2,000



Global Transmissions

Won \$1,000



Impact Story: Aori Botanical began as a way for mom and entrepreneur, Laura Resendiz, to help her son soothe his eczema and dermatitis. She began creating small batch, eco-friendly, and all natural skin and hair care products. Needing to focus on her business operations to truly grow and expand, she sought out the Foundation of Little Village for support. We first met Laura in April 2025 and she quickly reaped the benefits of our multi-pronged, holistic support.

She joined our 10-week Juntos Emprendemos class, received one-on-one support to finish her business registrations, completed our 4-week Juntos Avanzamos class, and then pursued the months-long process to ensure her finances were in order to receive a \$2,000 micro-grant. Laura went on to register for our Spanish pitch competition where she took home the first place prize. With all of this new capital, she purchased much needed supplies—including a powerful (and costly) mixer and a press for the shampoos—along with investing in her branding, market materials, and replaced a broken laptop for her business operations. Laura is the perfect example of a star student turned success story and we are proud to have played a role in her journey to economic achievement.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

Illinois State Designated Cultural District

The Foundation of Little Village officially launched the Little Village Cultural District on April 19, 2025 (image on the right). We are honored to oversee and manage this historic designation on behalf of the State of Illinois.

To guide the vision, planning, and activation of the district, the Little Village Cultural District Council was established. The Council is comprised of:



Volunteer Spotlight: Xquina Advisory Board

When we consider what cultural preservation looks like in Little Village, we are inspired by the devotion of immigrant-led businesses, the proud Latino identity, and the vibrant traditions that built this community.

The all-volunteer Xquina Advisory Board exemplifies what Little Village culture really means. This group is comprised of Juntos alumni and their guidance and advocacy have been essential to deepening the impact we have with local small businesses while promoting community engagement and rapid response to those in need. Their shared experiences encourage organic relationships amongst each other and with the small business community, offering a different kind of impact than traditional classroom instruction delivers. The Xquina Advisory Board spearheaded several events in 2025:

In June, we held our first **Xquina Pop Up Market** to showcase a variety of products and services. We welcomed 42 local small businesses—over half were graduates of our Juntos Entrepreneurial Classes.

In September, **Cafecito en la Xquina** was launched as a roundtable style gathering where attendees discuss current events, local challenges, innovative solutions, and how to support the business community. Serving as a chance to network and make social connections, this popular event continues to occur bi-weekly.

In December, the **Xquina Posada Networking & Toy Drive** brought together dozens of local entrepreneurs and small businesses to give back to their community with a successful toy drive and networking event.

Thank you to our Xquina Advisory Board members for your dedication!

Building Community During Hardship

The current political climate and economic uncertainty have placed significant strain on Little Village, a community that has felt these pressures in deeply personal and economic ways. The continued presence and operations of Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) have impacted consumer confidence, disrupted small business activity, and taken a toll on the mental health and well-being of our community members.

The Foundation of Little Village continues to work alongside community organizations to respond to evolving needs—sharing critical resources in Spanish, adapting programming through virtual engagement when needed, and creating safe, trusted spaces where community members feel supported and seen.

CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION

Xquina Logo



XQUINA

In celebration of this new community development, we held an Xquina logo competition. With 15 submissions, it was a difficult decision; however, one logo stood out among the rest. Thank you to our competition winner—and local 26th Street Corridor business—Trinum Studio!

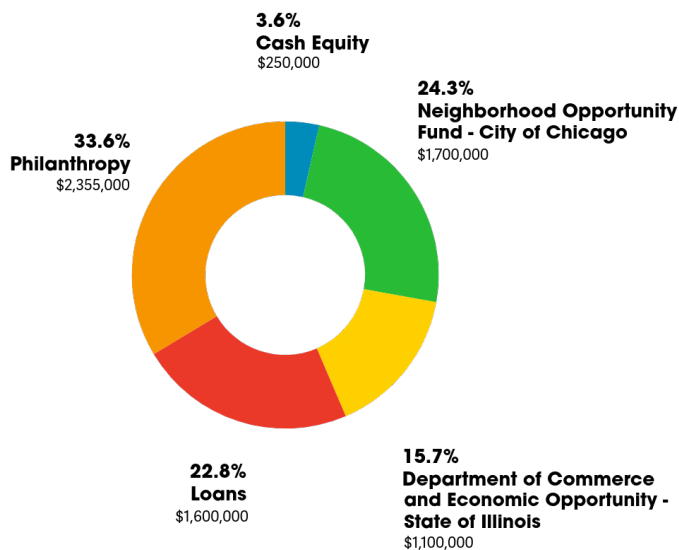
The Xquina logo reflects the spirit of connection, creativity, and entrepreneurship that defines the project. Inspired by the idea of “la esquina,” or “the corner,” the design symbolizes a gathering place where culture, community, and opportunity come together. Its modern yet locally rooted identity captures the vision of Xquina as a welcoming hub for collaboration, innovation, and small business growth in Little Village.

Xquina Incubator & Café

The Xquina Incubator & Café is getting closer each day to becoming Little Village’s premier hub for business services and entrepreneurial support. Once Phase I is complete, the Foundation of Little Village and its small business tenants will serve the community through a business incubator, café with a community conference room, and shared commercial kitchen. Transforming an 1880s-era building into a modern mixed-use community space has been a complex undertaking, requiring significant construction expertise, coordination, and financial investment to bring the vision of Xquina to life.

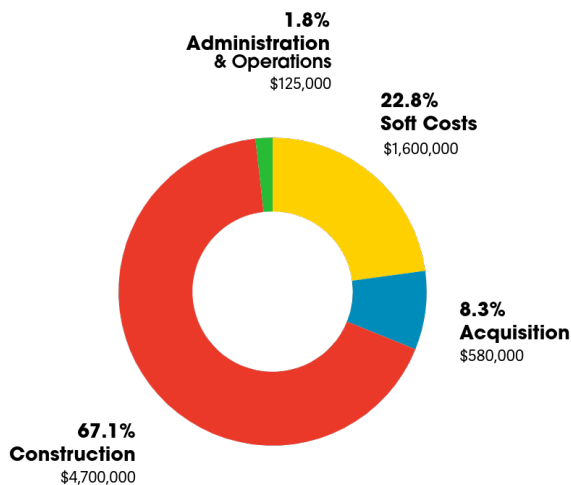
Xquina Financials

Xquina Sources



Total: \$7,005,000

Xquina Uses



Total: \$7,005,000

We are incredibly grateful to our funding partners and their unwavering belief in what this space will mean for our entrepreneurial community. As we move closer to move-in day, we must secure funding for the final touches such as furniture and equipment.



65%
COMPLETED



45%
MBE



5%
WBE

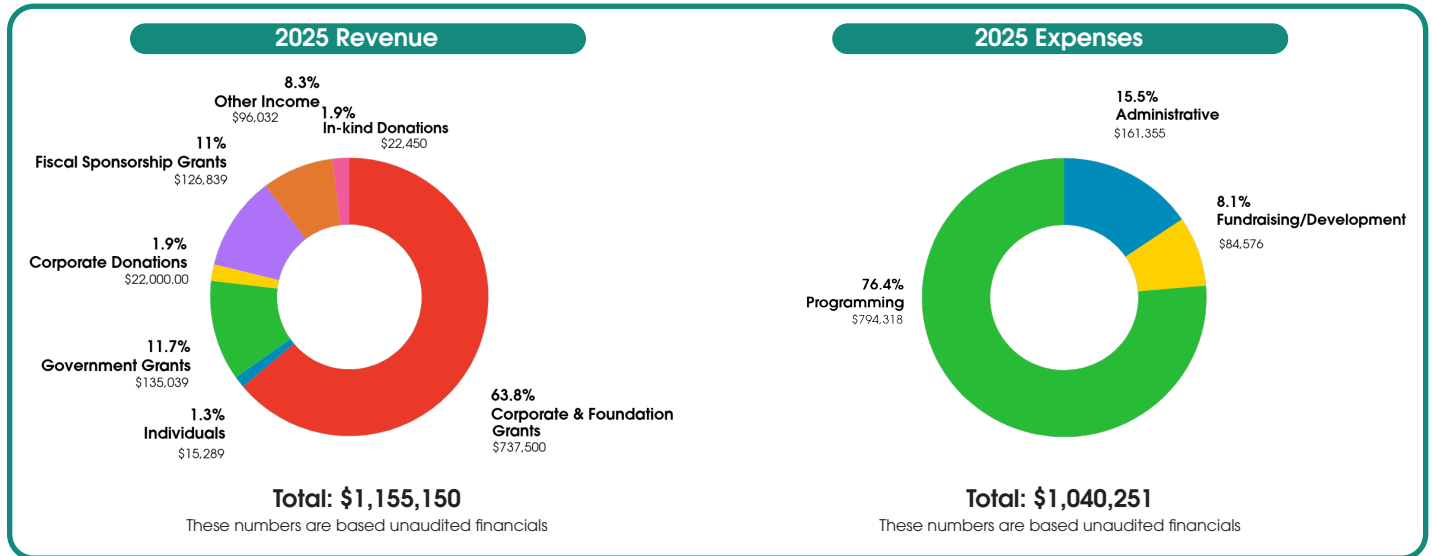


To learn more about the Xquina Incubator & Café project, and ways you can support the project, please scan the QR code.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we reflect on another year of progress, we are reminded that our impact is measured not only in programs and partnerships, but in the entrepreneurs, families, and communities whose resilience and ambition continue to shape Little Village and beyond. The creativity and determination of entrepreneurs inspire our work every day as we expand access to culturally relevant, bilingual support across Chicagoland.

This progress is made possible through the strength of our ecosystem partners, whose collaboration deepens our impact and extends our reach. We are equally grateful for the dedication of our team, the leadership of our Board of Directors, and the generosity of our donors, whose commitment sustains this work. Above all, we thank the community that continues to place its trust in the Foundation of Little Village. It is an honor to work alongside you in building a stronger and more prosperous future together.



Our Board of Directors

Dan Arce, Board President | Sun Optics
Arabel Alva Rosales, Board Secretary | AAR Tech
Jason Roberts, Board Member | Advantage Chevy

Dolores Muñoz, Board Member | Loop Capital Markets
Ambrocio González, Board Member | La Catedral Café

Our Team Members



Thank You to our 2025 Grant Partners





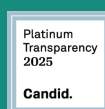
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Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity



The organization's legal name is Little Village Community Foundation Corp. and is an IRS designated 501(c)(3) charity. Our IRS Tax ID number is 83-1667740