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## The Tools to Succeed

Michael S. Lockett

There’s a saying along the lines of ‘give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day, but teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.’ And William Mann Jr. Community Development Corporation, working together with LegacyTexas Bank, is working to do just that. “We’re giving them the tools to succeed,” said Kalyn Peebles, executive director of William Mann Jr.

The CDC, which helps connect small business owners looking to succeed with loans when the banks consider them to much of a risk, as well as helping them to get training in the best practices and procedures needed to run a small business, is located in southeast Fort Worth.

“In many cases, CDCs or CDFIs can help step up and fill those gaps,” said Derric Hicks, president of the board of directors of William Mann Jr. CDC, as well as vice president and commercial lending officer at LegacyTexas Bank. Banks, which have more restrictions on how they lend their money, can partner with CDCs like William Mann Jr., which can work with small business owners to help finance their development, which then propels the economic growth of the entire area bit by bit.

Peebles took over as executive director of William Mann Jr. CDC in 2012. The CDC, which was founded in 1994, has been working since Peebles took over to be more proactive in supporting small business owners who are in need of assistance and unable to get it.

“Small business owners were not receiving support to move their business to the next stage of life,” said Peebles. William Mann Jr. CDC helped provide 13 loans just last year between \$5,000 and \$100,000. Somewhere between a third and a half of those loans were split between the CDC and a bank to reduce liability. That allowed those businesses to continue employing more than 130 people in the community, said Peebles. This year, they’ve already approved two loans, with seven to eight more in the pipeline ahead.



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William Mann Jr. CDC also works with small business owners in other ways to help them out. By working closely with the Fort Worth Business Assistance Center, the CDC is able to get small business owners the help they need with business counseling, planning, legal requirements, and accountability and filing best practices. Peebles talks about a former case where a contractor, looking to grow his business, worked with the CDC and BAC to identify and handle his issues, secure a line of credit, and establish himself as a bonded contractor under the name VIP Construction, LLC.

Hicks talked about an example where another small business owner worked with William Mann Jr. CDC to secure a loan, allowing them to grow their livelihood. The owner, who was leasing an event center, had the opportunity to buy the building outright when the owner decided to sell, but was not able to get a loan from a bank owing to their lack of equity. But by working with the CDC and LegacyTexas Bank, they were able to make up the equity shortfall and purchase the building.

“Now they own their building, and they’re no longer paying lease expenses, which were higher than their mortgage payments, and now they have an asset that they can keep in business for years to come,” said Hicks. “I look at that as an overall win-win, where we help the client, the customer was able to acquire the building, and William Mann Jr. was able to achieve its mission of service.”

Both entities are always looking to do more, though. William Mann Jr. is looking to partner with more financial institutions, in order to assist more small businesses with financial support.

“We’re trying to connect with financial institutions that haven’t yet partnered with us to secure additional capital,” said Peebles, talking about William Mann Jr.’s growing ability to provide loans for small businesses. LegacyTexas Bank is also looking to expand its role and do more good in the community.

“We are expanding our role with the organization,” said Hicks. “We’re locally based and our mission is to serve and grow our local community. The partnership with William Mann Jr CDC helps us accomplish that mission.”