

# 2022 COMMUNITY ADVOCACY AWARD HONOREES

## Building an ecosystem that advances equity for small business owners

This year's celebration of Eastern Bank Foundation's annual Community Advocacy Awards shines a light on our continued commitment to economic inclusion and mobility, particularly in support of the growth of businesses of color and advancing equity in the small business ecosystem. Recognizing that entrepreneurs and business owners are vital building blocks for every community, we ask you to join us in recognizing nine community organizations and their leaders and teams for making a difference in building equity and a stronger sense of community for business owners in BIPOC communities, which we broadly define as Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, Women, LGBTQ+, Veterans, and People with disabilities.



**Amplify People of Color (POC) Cape Cod** provides visibility, programming, education and resources to increase sustainable business ownership and generational wealth for people of color on Cape Cod. **Founder and Executive Director Tara Vargas Wallace** and her team run programs that help entrepreneurs of color with seed money to start a business, foster collaboration, and support a network of POC-owned businesses. Amplify has developed a virtual marketplace for business owners to promote and sell their products and services, and connect with other local businesses, allies and partners, all focused on creating greater equity on Cape Cod.



The **Brockton Redevelopment Authority (BRA)** is a quasi-public agency contracted by the City of Brockton, focused on community development and economic revitalization, specifically for the benefit of low- and moderate-income households of Brockton. Under the leadership of **Former Executive Director Robert Jenkins and Interim Executive Director Patricia Jackson**, they work with entrepreneurs by providing resources and funding opportunities for small businesses to survive and grow.



**The Boston Ujima Project** fills in financing gaps for small businesses by bringing together finance and organizing disciplines with many solutions including cooperatives, community funds, and buy local campaigns, that demonstrate better ways communities can relate to, and do business with, each other. **Executive Director Nia Evans** and her team offer leadership for an ecosystem approach and democratic investment strategy—where every Voting Member has an equal vote on the business, real estate, and infrastructural projects receiving investment and support.



**CommonWealth Kitchen** operates Boston's only non-profit, shared-use commercial kitchen and small-batch manufacturing operation. It houses 50+ food companies and works with over 200 food entrepreneurs each year. Focused on increasing equity in the food sector, **Executive Director Jen Faigel** and her team invest in BIPOC and women entrepreneurs by supplying the resources, training, infrastructure, and industry networks these businesses need to launch and maintain food service businesses, and help to bridge critical gaps for small businesses in Greater Boston.

# NINE ORGANIZATIONS ADVANCING EQUITY IN THE LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM



**Entrepreneurship for All Merrimack Valley (EforAll/EparaTodos)** supports a vibrant and strong entrepreneurial ecosystem in Merrimack Valley specifically for businesses owned by women, BIPOC and immigrants. EforAll's English and Spanish language programs include intensive business training, dedicated mentorship, grants and an extended professional support network. From coworking spaces to virtual workshops, **Executive Director Sophan Sok Smith** and the EforAll team provide the elements necessary to help local entrepreneurs develop successful enterprises.



The **New Hampshire Community Loan Fund (NHCLF)** has invested nearly \$400 million in loans in approximately 170 communities across the Granite State. **President and CEO Steve Saltzman, Community Business Lender Zachery Palmer** and their team help New Hampshire small businesses by providing capital and technical assistance to businesses in manufacturing, technology, retail and energy. NHCLF is one of the first Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) in the country bringing greater equity to New Hampshire's economy.



In Boston, the **Innovation Studio** helps women and BIPOC innovators and entrepreneurs access resources to launch and grow their own businesses. **President Daniel Enríquez Vidaña** and his team provide accelerators to help entrepreneurs launch or relaunch a business, advising sessions with experts to guide the entrepreneurial journey, workshops and events to support business development, and spaces for hosting business events.



The **North Shore Latino Business Association (NSLBA)** is the largest small business association in the North Shore of Massachusetts helping Latino business owners and entrepreneurs grow. **Founder, President and CEO Frances Martinez** and the team lead an organization that provides capital for Latino-owned businesses, trains entrepreneurs, offers networking opportunities, and represents Latino business owners before state and local elected officials. Its comprehensive model of support serves as an invaluable resource for Latino entrepreneurs and business owners.



The **Sustainable Business Network (SBN)** is the first association of businesses in the United States devoted to economic, social and environmental change. The Cambridge-based organization, and **Founder and Executive Director Laury Hammel**, work to build a local economy that is green and fair. SBN promotes inclusion and diversity, and supports BIPOC businesses with technical assistance, networking and financing connections. It brings together diverse-owned businesses for networking, education and mutual support, and recognizes businesses for their local, green and fair business practices.

## Investment in the Future

The pandemic has brought out the strength and resiliency of our local small businesses, which has not come easy. Behind every thriving business owner are resources helping them on the path to success. Efforts to advance equity in our small business ecosystem, so that every business owner no matter how they identify can thrive, are growing and innovating thanks to many local community leaders and their teams. Please join us in celebrating Eastern's 2022 Community Advocacy Award Honorees.



*Nancy Huntington Stager is a recognized leader in corporate citizenship and President and CEO of the Eastern Bank Foundation, which is named among the Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts by The Women's Edge/Commonwealth Institute. She is also recognized as a Boston Business Journal Power 50. In addition, Eastern is ranked by the Boston Business Journal among the most charitable companies in Massachusetts, its sixth consecutive year among the top 10.*