



In Pursuit of Economic Freedom

2018 IMPACT REPORT

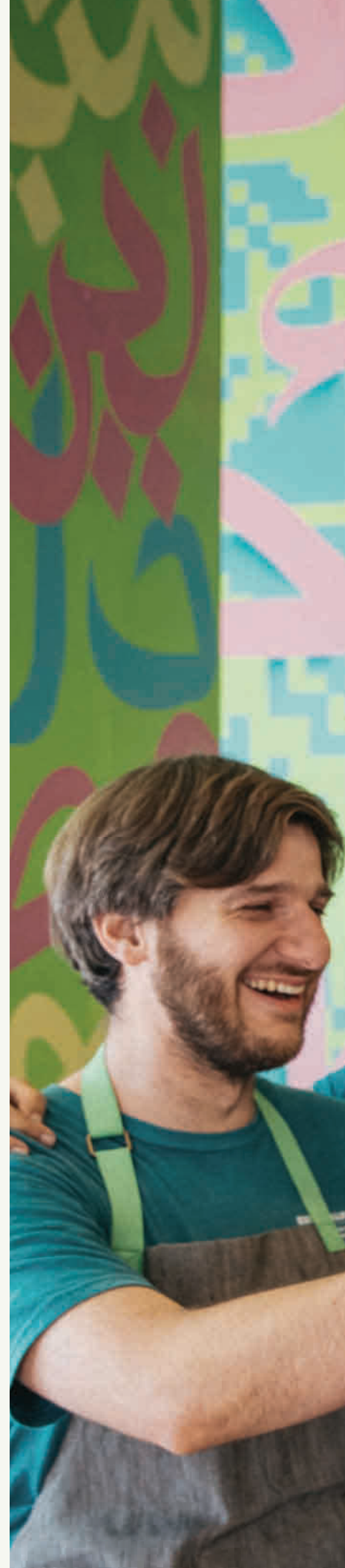


Nourishing Food Entrepreneurs & Communities

The mission of La Cocina is to cultivate low income food entrepreneurs as they formalize and grow their businesses by providing affordable commercial kitchen space, industry-specific technical assistance and access to market opportunities. We focus primarily on women from communities of color and immigrant communities.

Our vision is that entrepreneurs gain financial security by doing what they love to do, creating an innovative, vibrant and inclusive economic landscape.

Reem Assil and her staff members Eli Isaacs, Zaynah Hindi, and Jenabi Parera at Reem's Bakery, 3301 E 12th Street #133 in Oakland





REEM'S C... MENIA
TRADITIONAL... FOOD
MADE WITH C... LOVE.

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&

2.

Gender, race and immigration status all influence an individual's ability to build wealth.

The Problem






Wealth inequality begins at birth and is perpetuated throughout an individual's life. Women, immigrants and people of color experience racism, sexism, implicit biases and a comparative lack of opportunities in the formal job market, making it difficult for them to move up the economic ladder.

Alejandra Juárez, Brenda Juárez and Guadalupe Guerrero at El Pípila's Restaurant, 889 Brannan Street in San Francisco



A close-up photograph of a person, likely a woman, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and a striped apron. She is cooking rice in a large metal pan. A wooden spoon is visible in the foreground, holding a portion of the rice. The background is dark and out of focus.

Being excluded from good jobs in the mainstream market has prompted many low-income women to start their own, informal food enterprises. For these individuals, business ownership opportunities are especially crucial in their pursuit of economic freedom.

Carmen Figueroa, owner of El Mesón de Violeta,
2495 Bancroft Way, Berkeley ASUC Student
Union





CHALLENGING A HISTORY OF OPPRESSION

The number of women-owned firms in the US has risen by 114% in the past 20 years¹, 78% of new women-owned businesses are owned by women of color², and immigrants founded 25% of all new businesses last year.³

Despite this growth, women of color are still denied bank loans more frequently than their white, male counterparts and receive only 2% of investor and venture capital funding.⁴

Despite their talent, they are undervalued and overlooked—restricting their opportunities to grow.

¹Business Insider, November 2017

²Womenable, 2016

³Forbes, July 2018

⁴Kauffman Foundation, January 2019

Tina Stevens, owner of A Girl Named Pinky, 2495 Bancroft Way, Berkeley ASUC Student Union

HOW DO YOU START A SMALL FOOD BUSINESS IN AMERICA'S MOST EXPENSIVE CITY?

In San Francisco, rents have become increasingly expensive due to an influx of demand from the tech sector and a limited supply space. In 2018, commercial rent in San Francisco hit an all-time high at \$81.25 per square foot.⁵

As a result, only businesses with existing capital or access to capital can afford to rent commercial spaces. Aspiring low-income food entrepreneurs are priced-out of the market and therefore, are unable grow their business past a certain point or are forced to close.

⁵ San Francisco Chronicle, October 2018





Our Solution

La Cocina provides a network of critical resources to launch small business.





La Cocina's incubator program offers affordable commercial kitchen space, hands-on technical assistance and **access to market opportunities** to entrepreneurs who are launching and growing food businesses. Since 2005, La Cocina has focused on the project of small business incubation with a vision to increase inclusivity in the food industry and offer equitable opportunity for business ownership and **asset generation**.

Bernadine Sewell, owner of Pinky & Red's, 2495 Bancroft Way, Berkeley ASUC Student Union





WHAT ARE ACCESS-TO-MARKET OPPORTUNITIES?

Access-to-market opportunities are sales opportunities that lead to business growth (think catering gigs, farmers market stands, pop-ups, etc.). La Cocina's incubator program focuses on access to markets as a mechanism to both increase revenues for participants and increase their visibility and voice in a crowded and highly competitive marketplace.

For many businesses, our access-to-market support culminates in affordable brick & mortar spaces like kiosks, cafes and restaurants that provide access to regular sales and opportunities for business growth.

Lupe and Brenda selling at O'Mole Night



WHAT IS ASSET GENERATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Asset building is how individuals, families, and communities gather the resources that will move them towards economic well-being, for now and for years to come. Assets—or resources—range from savings accounts and business ownership to education and health. Owning a car or a home, college savings and retirement accounts, job skills and social networks: these are all assets too.



Dilsa Lugo, owner of Los Cilantros, alongside her family and her staff, 3105 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley

Without assets, people just make ends meet, living paycheck to paycheck. With assets, people can: Remain stable through financial emergencies, stay in their homes and neighborhoods, use their good credit to secure a mortgage, pursue higher education for themselves or their children, take risks that result in a better job or starting a business, and save for retirement.

LEARN MORE AT [ASSETFUNDERS.ORG](https://www.assetfund.org)





“Each of our entrepreneurs bootstraps their business. Every momo, bowl of pho, or perfect huarache funds the next sale, the next hire, the next piece of equipment needed for the businesses to grow.

La Cocina’s access to market work is focused on expanding those sales opportunities so that the entrepreneurs can grow their businesses more quickly.

Our work, I believe, is about rewiring our economy into an equitable one—a place where any talented entrepreneur has a fair shot at making it.”

GEETIKA AGRAWAL, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

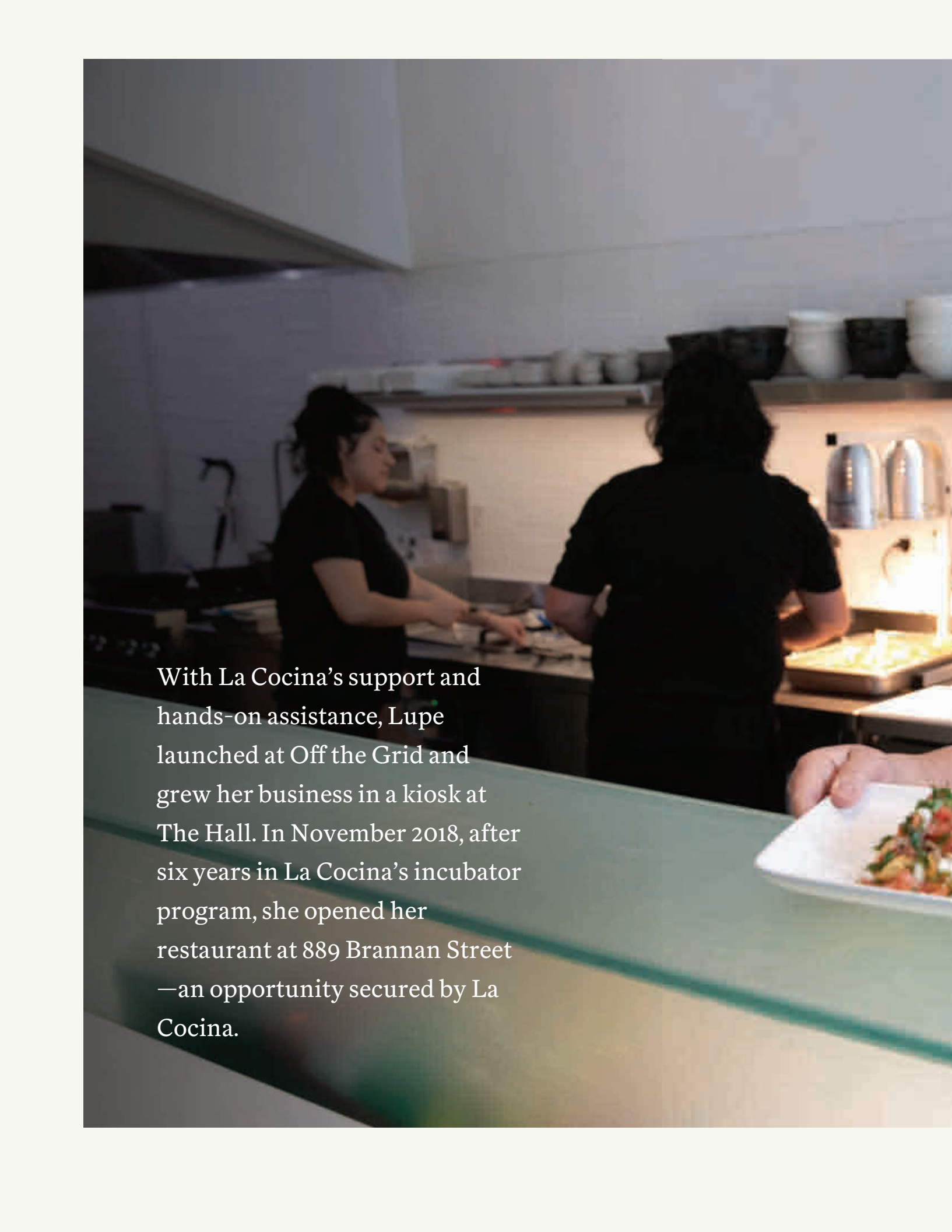


Guadalupe (Lupe) Guerrero

In 1988, Lupe migrated to the US in search of a better life for her and her two young daughters. After arriving in Berkeley, Lupe found a job at a taqueria where she worked 12 hour days, 6 days a week.




She earned \$5/hr. After 12 years of tireless work in kitchens, Lupe saved up enough money for her daughters to join her in the US and in 2012, with a friend's encouragement, she joined La Cocina to start her own food business.



With La Cocina's support and hands-on assistance, Lupe launched at Off the Grid and grew her business in a kiosk at The Hall. In November 2018, after six years in La Cocina's incubator program, she opened her restaurant at 889 Brannan Street —an opportunity secured by La Cocina.



A background image showing a wooden deck railing in the foreground and a tree trunk in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

“Thanks to La Cocina, I’m no longer living paycheck-to-paycheck. I’ve created jobs for other people who are just starting out. I’ve built a business I can pass on to my daughters. And of course, I’m bringing the flavors of my beloved Acámbaro to San Francisco—the city where La Cocina changed my life forever.”

Guadalupe Guerrero, Chef and Owner of El Pípila



OUR INCUBATOR IN 2018

40 Businesses incubated

10 New businesses

7 Graduations (5 restaurants, 1 kiosk
and 1 edible insect farm)

5 Kiosks launched at UC Berkeley's
ASUC Student Union

64 Full-time jobs

45 Part-time jobs

\$4.2M in sales



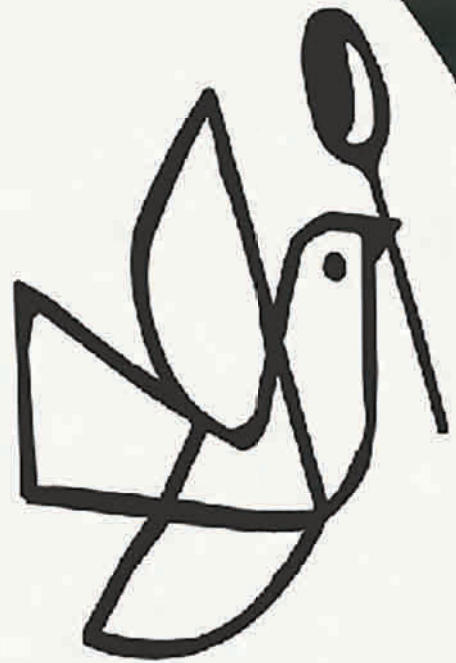
El Mesón de Violeta offering a mix of Chilean empanadas, history and activism at UC Berkeley.

BORN AT

La

Cocina

CULTIVATING FOOD ENTREPRENEURS



La Cocina got a brand revamp in 2018 many thanks to Office.

LA COCINA GRADUATE BUSINESSES

Our graduates are thriving, running award-winning restaurants, garnering national press recognition, operating factories and mentoring businesses still in the incubator.

\$11.9M in sales

152 Full-time jobs

26 Part-time jobs

\$1.6M of Meals served by active and graduate La Cocina businesses

*22 graduate businesses reported in 2018



Fernay McPherson, owner of Minnie Bell's Soul Movement, 5959 Shellmound Street in Emeryville



Minnie Bell's Soul Movement

Fernay learned to cook from her grandmother Lilly Bell and her great-aunt Minnie while growing up in San Francisco's Fillmore District. Named a San Francisco Chronicle Rising Star Chef in 2017, Fernay's thriving business now employs 10 people.



“Being a part of the La Cocina family provides so many platforms for us outside of cooking...like supporting us in telling our stories.”



Old Damascus Fare

The Rawas family opened their kiosk at the UC Berkeley Student Union last fall alongside four other businesses from La Cocina's incubator program. In Oakland, they spent a lot of time cooking the foods they missed from back home for friends and family.



Pretty soon, they started receiving requests to cook food for friend's birthday parties or work gatherings. Although the family never thought life in America would involve running a food business, they've embraced the opportunity food has given them to connect with their community.



La Cocina Municipal Marketplace

/La Cocina/ that's us

/Municipal/ relating to a city or town

/Marketplace/ like a food hall, but less trendy

What's Next



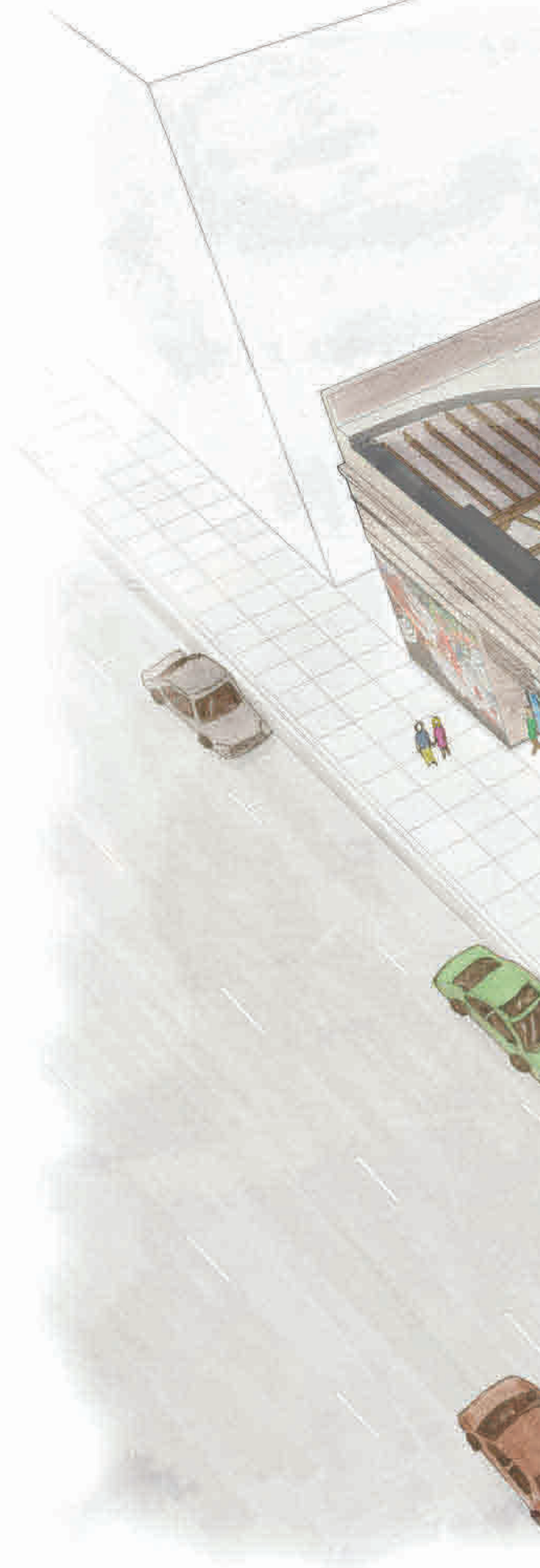
The 7,000-square-foot marketplace at 101 Hyde Street in the Tenderloin will be the first women-led food hall in the country and will provide affordable commercial space to 7 women, immigrant and people of color-owned businesses.

As the Bay Area struggles with the gentrifying effects of the technology industry, the very innovation that this area prides itself on is being stifled by rising costs, pricing out the small-scale entrepreneurs that have historically thrived in urban centers.

Maribel Ramirez, La Cocina staff member inside the old post office at 101 Hyde Street that will become the La Cocina Municipal Marketplace.

La Cocina's Marketplace offers an alternative; a community gathering space, economic leadership from the ground up, job opportunities for residents and a sense of pride and ownership in what we can build together.

A shared marketplace, much like an incubator kitchen, offers a way to lower the barriers to entry, mitigate the risk imposed on low-income entrepreneurs and increase equity in business ownership. Businesses gain access to pooled resources, business networks that can prove vital to their success and a reduction of the individual burden felt by high rent and overhead costs. Those savings create more assets for the business owners and pass on lower costs to consumers, making cities more livable.







WAYS TO SUPPORT LA COCINA

Donate Turn your paper into power for others. Sign up to become a monthly sustaining donor starting at \$10/month at www.lacocinasf.org/membership.

Volunteer at La Cocina's next event or mentor a La Cocina business owner.

Spread the Word about the need for greater racial, gender and economic equity in the food industry and beyond. Start a conversation by inviting a friend to dinner at a La Cocina graduate restaurant (there are 30 to choose from!).

Purchase a La Cocina Gift Box filled with artisan treats from La Cocina graduates. Order one for yourself and ship to friends for the holidays!

Attend and Sponsor La Cocina Events to support economic opportunity for working class food entrepreneurs and engage with your community. Check out our upcoming events at www.lacocinasf.org/events.

