

Small Business Concierge Program



February - August 2025



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Report Summary

In February 2025, the City of Santa Rosa officially launched the Small Business Concierge Program to help streamline business support services, improve communication between city departments and entrepreneurs, and help drive equitable economic growth.

The Business Concierge Program was designed as a hands-on, high-touch model to guide entrepreneurs and small business owners through city processes, including permitting, licensing, zoning, and access to local resources.

The program prioritizes outreach to commercial centers, downtown districts, and BIPOC-led businesses, fostering collaboration and reducing barriers to entry or expansion.

More information about the program:

<https://www.srcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/45029/City-of-Santa-Rosa-Business-Concierge-Program-PDF>

At a Glance:

The Small Business Concierge Program has supported over 150 entrepreneurs and small business owners through streamlined services and personalized guidance. With a focus on equity and interdepartmental coordination, the program facilitated over 250 touchpoints across permitting, licensing, commercial mall projects, and business engagement meetups. This report summarizes outcomes from February through August 2025.



Program Activity

Category	Weekly Average Inquiries	Monthly Estimate	6-Month Total (Est.)
Business Entrepreneurs Supported	3 to 5	~16	~96
Small Business Owners Supported	2 to 3	~10	~60
Commercial Mall Projects & Inquiries <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Santa Rosa Plaza• Montgomery Village	2 to 3	~10	~60
Code Enforcement matters related to businesses have been resolved (i.e., graffiti, nuisance, trespassing)	1	~4	~24

Business Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

- Over 150 entrepreneurs and small business owners were supported with permitting, licensing, information, resources, and startup navigation guidance.
- Common inquiries included mobile vending, retail startups, food service businesses, signage, tenant improvement costs, and façade improvements grant follow-ups.
- Many clients were first-time business owners or sole proprietors seeking bilingual assistance and guidance on resources.
- Several businesses included during this time period, to name a few:
 - Mitote Food Park
 - J&A Lounge
 - La Fondita DT
 - Aroma de Café
 - Nana's Café
 - Belleza Latina Salon
 - Tamales Oaxaqueños
 - Chavez's Paint
 - Fiber Snob
 - Bella Phytologic



Commercial Mall Business Support & Engagement

Shopping Malls:

- Santa Rosa Plaza – Weekly email correspondence with General Manager.
- Zoning Clearances, signage application permits and approvals, building permits.
- Montgomery Village – Meetings held once a week with the project management contractor and lead architect.
- Project tracking, Tenant Improvements, building permits, plan check and review, and temporary relocation of several stores.
- Total Inquiries: Estimated 60+ over the 6-month period
- Notable Businesses Engaged:
 - PF Chang's
 - Dave & Buster's
 - Salt & Sand
 - Sea Thai Bistro
 - The Mendocino
 - J. Jill Retail
 - Ah Huevo
 - UME Shakes



Downtown Business Engagements & Meetups

Number of Business/Partner MeetUps: Ten (10) MeetUps have been held in the newly renovated Business Lounge at City Hall. Workshops and feedback sessions have included business and property owners, commercial real estate brokers and representatives from the Downtown Action Organization, Railroad Square Association, Keegan and Coppin, Inc., Ross Street Business Owners, A La Bonne Franquette (business roundtable host), Trellus, Go Local, SBDC, Redwood Credit Union, Rise and Thrive, and others.

These gatherings have enhanced communication with business and property owners, as well as commercial real estate brokers, and have helped increase awareness of available city support and services.

BIPOC Business Partner Meetups

Number of BIPOC Business MeetUps: Of the ten referenced above, three (3) MeetUps were held with the Rise and Thrive group comprised of organizations who support our BIPOC small businesses and entrepreneurs. It includes organizations such as:

- The Hispanic Chamber of Sonoma County
- The Black Chamber of Commerce
- The Asian American and Pacific Islander Chamber
- Sonoma County SBDC
- The Santa Rosa Metro Chamber
- The Santa Rosa Junior College Adult Education
- Career Technical Education
- The Sonoma County Hardship Fund
- Sonoma County Economic Development Collaborative
- And SCORE

These sessions have improved collaboration between community-based organizations and the City, ensuring more culturally responsive outreach.

Conclusion & Next Steps

The first six months of the Small Business Concierge Program confirm a strong demand for personalized support and targeted outreach to businesses. With over 250 touchpoints and growing business sector engagement, the program has laid a solid foundation for long-term impact.

NEXT STEPS:

- Expand outreach to additional commercial corridors and underserved communities in accordance with the Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- Complete the launch of the new One Stop Shop digital intake form for appointment setting and efficient tracking, and follow-up of entrepreneurs and small business owners contacted.
- Implement feedback tools in the virtual One Stop Shop to assess business satisfaction and impact.

Testimonials

“Offering the business concierge support program helped us get through the complexities of the permit process and we were able to begin our project without many delays.”- President, Slavik Nenaydokh, Bella Phytologic.

“The Dave & Buster’s team worked closely with the City’s Business Concierge team, particularly Rafael Rivero, throughout the permitting process. Rafael’s guidance was critical in helping us navigate approvals efficiently and move the project forward.”- Angel Robinson, Property Development Manager, Dave & Buster’s.

