



# Legacy Business Registry

# Application Review Sheet

*Application Number:* LBR-2025-26-032  
*Business Name:* Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center  
*Business Address:* 275 5th St.  
*District:* District 6  
*Applicant:* Chris Bailey, Communications and Development Manager  
*Nomination Date:* February 6, 2026  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Matt Dorsey

**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes  No

333 Valencia St. from 1985 to 1989 (4 years)  
1453 Mission St. from 1989 to 1992 (3 years)  
490 2nd St. from 1993 to 1997 (4 years)  
275 5th St. from 1997 to Present (29 years)

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes  No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes  No

**FEATURES OR TRADITIONS:** Services for small businesses

**NOTES:** NA

**DELIVERY DATE TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:** February 18, 2026

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds  
Legacy Business Program

## Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business  
City Hall Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-6680  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org  
[www.legacybusiness.org](http://www.legacybusiness.org)



City and County  
of San Francisco



Board of Supervisors,  
District 6

**MATT DORSEY**

麥德誠

February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Director Katy Tang, *Via email* <[Katy.Tang@sfgov.org](mailto:Katy.Tang@sfgov.org)>  
San Francisco Office of Small Business  
City Hall, Room 140  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Tang,

I am pleased to offer my strong support for the designation of Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center as a Legacy Business of the City and County of San Francisco.

For four decades, Renaissance has stood as one of San Francisco's most enduring and impactful institutions supporting small business creation, economic mobility, and inclusive entrepreneurship. Founded in 1985, Renaissance has operated continuously in San Francisco for nearly forty years, adapting to the city's changing economic landscape while remaining steadfast in its mission: to equip aspiring and established entrepreneurs—particularly those with limited access to traditional resources—with the tools, knowledge, and support needed to build sustainable, community-rooted businesses.

Renaissance's contribution to San Francisco extends far beyond its physical footprint. Each year, the organization serves thousands of small business owners across the Bay Area, many of whom are low- to moderate-income, women, immigrants, and entrepreneurs from historically underserved communities. Through bilingual training, one-on-one advising, access to capital and markets, and long-term mentorship, Renaissance has helped launch and stabilize businesses that now form the backbone of neighborhoods across the city. These businesses generate jobs, activate commercial corridors, and preserve the cultural and economic diversity that defines San Francisco.

From its long-standing home in the South of Market neighborhood, Renaissance has also become a visible and respected civic presence. Its building at 275 5th Street serves not only as a hub for entrepreneurship, but as a public expression of community identity through large-scale murals that celebrate immigrant histories, cultural heritage, and economic opportunity. These works underscore Renaissance's commitment to place-based investment and to honoring the communities it serves.

Equally significant is the organization's leadership and institutional continuity. Under the long-tenured leadership of CEO Sharon Miller and a dedicated board of directors, Renaissance has demonstrated stability, accountability, and long-term vision. Its diversified funding model, public-private partnerships, and recent capital investments position the organization to continue serving San Francisco's small business community for generations to come.

Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center is not simply a service provider; it is a cornerstone of San Francisco's small business ecosystem and a proven engine of inclusive economic development. Its legacy is visible in the thousands of entrepreneurs it has supported, the neighborhoods it has strengthened, and the civic values it embodies.

For these reasons, I strongly and unequivocally recommend Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center for inclusion in San Francisco's Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

MATT DORSEY

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Dorsey".



# Legacy Business Registry Application



## Business Information

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**Business name:** Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center

**Business owner name(s):** Sharon Miller

*Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business*

**Current business address:** 275 5th St., San Francisco, CA 94103

**Business phone number:** 415-541-8580

**Business email:**

**Mailing address (if different than above):**

**Website:** www.rencenter.org

**Link to social media:** www.facebook.com/RenaissanceEntrepreneurshipCenter

**Link to social media #2:** www.instagram.com/rencenter

**7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN):** 0151424

## Contact Person Information

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**Contact person name:** Chris Bailey

**Contact person title:** Communications and Development Manager

**Contact phone number:**

**Contact email:**

## Business Locations

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List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location.

Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

**Original San Francisco address:** 333 Valencia St. **Zip Code:** 94103

**Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N):**  Y

**Dates at this location: From:** 1985 **To:** 1989

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**Other address (if applicable):** 1453 Mission St. **Zip Code:** 94103

**Dates at this location: From:** 1989 **To:** 1992

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**Other address (if applicable):** 490 2nd St. **Zip Code:** 94107

**Dates at this location: From:** 1993 **To:** 1997

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**Other address (if applicable):** 275 5th St. **Zip Code:** 94103

**Dates at this location: From:** 1997 **To:** Present

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**Other Address (if applicable):**  **Zip Code:**

**Dates at this location: From:**  **To:**

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## Applicant Disclosures

### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Name: Chris Bailey

Signature:

*Chris Bailey*

Date: 05/19/2025

# Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center

## Written Historical Narrative

### Introduction

#### a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that provides entrepreneurship training and support services to help lower-income individuals start and grow their own small businesses. It offers business training classes and workshops, one-on-one consulting, access to capital and markets, skills-building workshops, and networking opportunities tailored for underserved communities. All services are offered in English and Spanish. With many decades of experience, it serves as a launchpad for small business owners working to build lasting economic independence.

#### b. Describe whom the business serves.

Renaissance serves over 2,000 emerging and established Bay Area small business owners annually, providing accessible, high-quality support to individuals seeking to launch, stabilize, grow, or pivot their businesses. Renaissance works with people from a wide range of backgrounds, the majority of whom are very-low to moderate-income with limited access to traditional resources, and offers practical tools, expert guidance, and a supportive network to help build sustainable, community-rooted businesses.

#### c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

Small business training and support.

### Criterion 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years

#### a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

Renaissance was founded in 1985 by Walter Johnson and Michael S. Bernick to empower and support individuals in launching and growing small businesses.

Michael S. Bernick is an attorney and longtime workforce policy leader whose career has focused on expanding access to employment, job training, and economic opportunity. He later served as Director of California's Employment Development Department from 1999 to 2004, overseeing one of the state's largest labor agencies, and has continued his work as Special Counsel at Duane Morris LLP and as a workforce development researcher and author. His commitment to building systems that help people achieve economic stability and long-term success is foundational to Renaissance's mission and impact.

Walter Johnson was a prominent San Francisco labor leader who served as the head of the San Francisco Labor Council for 19 years. Over a career spanning more than 50 years, he was an influential figure in local labor relations, advocating for workers' rights.

Since its inception, Renaissance has maintained continuous operations in San Francisco, adapting to the city's changing economic landscape while remaining committed to inclusive entrepreneurship.

Renaissance first established a formal location at 333 Valencia Street in the Mission District, where it operated from 1985 to 1989. It then moved to 1453 Mission Street (1989–1992), followed by a relocation to 490 2nd Street (1993–1997). In 1997, Renaissance purchased its building at 275 5th Street, where it continues to serve San Francisco's diverse small business community.

Throughout its history, Renaissance has remained guided by a dedicated leadership team and board of directors. The organization has grown significantly since its founding, expanding into neighboring counties while maintaining San Francisco as its operational and administrative home base.

**b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.**

1985 to 1986:	Michael S. Bernick (former CEO)
1986 to 1999:	Claudia Viek (former CEO)
1999 to Present:	Sharon Miller (current CEO)

**c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.**

Renaissance has not ceased operations in San Francisco at any point since its founding in 1985. During the COVID-19 pandemic, while in-person programming was temporarily suspended due to public health restrictions, the organization swiftly transitioned to a virtual service model. This shift enabled Renaissance to continue offering uninterrupted support to small business owners at a time when it was most needed.

**Criterion 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community**

**a. Describe the business' contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community, business sector, or San Francisco as a whole.**

Renaissance has played a central role in shaping San Francisco's small business ecosystem since 1985. It has helped thousands of entrepreneurs, the majority of them women and individuals

from historically under-resourced communities, launch businesses that are now cornerstones of their neighborhoods. By offering accessible training, mentorship, and capital resources, Renaissance has contributed to the cultural and economic identity of San Francisco. From its longstanding headquarters in SoMa to its presence in Bayview Hunters Point, Renaissance's work is visible both through the businesses it supports and through its physical spaces. The public murals on its 5th Street building reflect the people and histories of the communities Renaissance serves, reinforcing its long-standing role in San Francisco's neighborhood based economic development.

**b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?**

Renaissance has been led by many influential figures in the city's small business and nonprofit sectors. CEO Sharon Miller, who has led the organization for over 25 years, was recently honored by the City and County of San Francisco with an official proclamation recognizing her decades of service and impact. Additionally, Renaissance has hosted or partnered on major events with organizations including Visa, Comcast, PayPal, Avenue Greenlight, the YPO network, and city departments to elevate small business voices and ensure representation in economic decision-making. Mayor London Breed has served as the keynote speaker at its annual event, and other civic luminaries, including Scott Weiner, Mark Leno, David Chiu, and members of the Board of Supervisors, have attended and supported Renaissance's events. Fiona Ma, California State Treasurer, served on the Renaissance Board of Directors prior to her joining the SF Board of Supervisors in 2002.

**c. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

Renaissance demonstrates its commitment to the community through deeply rooted, ongoing service and cross-sector collaboration. It provides free and low-cost business education, networking events, and supportive services, including on-site business incubation to the public. It regularly partners with community-based organizations, schools, and housing providers to reach individuals who have historically lacked access to traditional business resources. Renaissance also hosts public marketplaces, participates in neighborhood events, and designs specialized programs for emerging entrepreneurs with unique needs.

Its leadership is equally engaged in advancing inclusive economic development. CEO Sharon Miller was a founding member of the Steering Committee of the California Women's Business Network, helping to shape policies and programs that support women business owners across the state and a Founding Member of the San Francisco Economic Development Association. She also served as Board Chair and Board Member of the California Association of Micro Enterprise Organizations (CAMEO) and Board Member of the national Association of Women's Business Centers (AWBC). Marcus Tartt, Director of Renaissance Bayview Center, serves as Secretary of the Bayview Merchants Association, and Lisa Kirvin, Managing Director, served as Board Chair and Board Member of the Yerba Buena Partnership (formerly Yerba Buena Community Benefits District).

Through both its programming and leadership, Renaissance reflects a long-standing dedication to building local economic power from the ground up.

**d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?**

Renaissance and their clients have been widely featured in local media, professional publications, and historical documentation for its enduring impact on small business development and economic equity in the Bay Area.

Media outlets such as *NBC Bay Area*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *KQED*, *ABC7 News*, *Hoodline*, *Mission Local*, and *El Tecolote* have highlighted Renaissance's role in supporting underrepresented entrepreneurs and neighborhood-based economic development. In a 2023 segment, *NBC Bay Area* spotlighted Renaissance's work in helping local businesses recover and adapt in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, showcasing the organization's relevance and reach in real-time community resilience efforts. Renaissance was also featured on *Bay Area Focus* for its commitment to accessible entrepreneurship training and mentorship.

Renaissance is profiled in professional directories, including GuideStar, and referenced in workforce development literature, including works by its founding Executive Director, Michael S. Bernick. Bernick's influence and the organization's origins as a job training initiative in the 1980s are noted in public records and academic texts, reinforcing its legacy as a pioneer in inclusive entrepreneurship.

Several key media references include the following:

- [Holiday marketplace uplifts small business in Redwood City](#)  
NBC Bay Area  
November 21, 2024
- [A Closer Look: Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center](#)  
NBC Bay Area  
August 4, 2024
- [Share the Spirit: How to succeed in small business — meet the organization that helps make it happen](#)  
East Bay Times  
December 14, 2023
- [Voices of the Community: Episode 47- Renaissance Entrepreneur Center](#)  
George Koster on YouTube  
November 2, 2021

**e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?**

Renaissance has received numerous formal commendations and awards recognizing its impact on small business development and inclusive economic growth in San Francisco.

Most recently, Renaissance was named Nonprofit of the Year by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce at the 2024 Ebbie Awards and was ranked among the Top 10 Largest Incubators and Accelerators in the Greater Bay Area by the *San Francisco Business Times* in January 2025.

In September 2024, the City and County of San Francisco issued an official proclamation declaring September 26, 2024, as “Sharon Miller Day,” honoring Renaissance’s CEO for her 25+ years of leadership in the sector. The recognition celebrated both her contributions and Renaissance’s citywide role as a trusted, long-standing institution in economic development.

Renaissance has a long history of civic recognition, including:

- California State Senate resolutions
- Certificates of Recognition from the California State Assembly
- Certificates of Honor from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors
- Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition
- Certificate of Honor from the City and County of San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder
- Certificate of Recognition from then-Senator Kamala Harris
- Small Business Advocate of the Year award
- SOMBA Advocacy Organization of the Year
- Bank of America Neighborhood Excellence Award

These recognitions span decades of dedicated work.

**f. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**

If Renaissance were to shut down or leave San Francisco, the city would lose one of its most enduring, comprehensive, and trusted institutions for small business support. The entrepreneurs who rely on its culturally responsive, accessible services would face significant gaps in training, mentorship, and access to new markets, capital, and opportunity. Neighborhoods throughout San Francisco that have benefited from Renaissance-supported businesses would feel the loss of economic vitality, diversity, and locally rooted enterprise. Renaissance is more than a service provider—it is a launchpad, a safety net, and a catalyst for local economic power that would be difficult to replace.

**Criterion 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business**

**a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?**

In 2024, Renaissance installed two large-scale exterior murals at its South of Market location at 275 5th Street.

“Ani – Harvested Hopes,” created by Filipina artist Venazir Martinez in collaboration with SOMA Pilipinas, faces Folsom Street and honors immigrant stories, cultural identity, and the entrepreneurial spirit that drives the communities Renaissance serves. It acknowledges the cultural significance of the South of Market Filipino Cultural Heritage District. In 2025, Ani – Harvested Hopes received national recognition with a Dream Big Award from the National Mural Awards, underscoring the power of this work to celebrate local history, welcome the public into the district, and strengthen the social fabric of the area.

The second exterior mural, “Growth Within Ourselves,” was created by artist Atlix Martinez, extending this commitment to community pride, learning, and economic opportunity. Support from Avenue Greenlight, alongside Yerba Buena Partnership (formerly YBCBD), helped make these public art projects possible as part of a broader effort to beautify and uplift the neighborhood.

Renaissance is now collaborating with 1AM Projects to add a third mural to the building, which is funded as part of 1AM Projects' support from Levi Strauss & Co.

Together, these murals function as public landmarks that reflect Renaissance’s mission and its long-standing presence in the neighborhood.

**b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.**

Entrepreneurship training and small business support services.

**c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?**

Renaissance is a nonprofit organization governed by a board of directors and led by a professional executive team, ensuring institutional continuity beyond any single leader or staff member. The organization has established long-term strategic plans, diversified revenue streams (from federal, state, and local government contracts, corporate and foundation grants, individuals, and earned income), and strong community and city partnerships. Its multi-site model and leadership development practices are designed to sustain and grow operations well into the future, regardless of changes in individual leadership.

In 2025, Renaissance received a New Markets Tax Credit through SF CIF, which will allow them to make critical capital improvements to their facility at 275 5th Street and support organizational capacity building.

**d. What challenges is the business facing today?**

Renaissance faces many of the same challenges impacting the broader nonprofit and small business support sectors: rising operational costs in San Francisco, limited access to unrestricted funding, and increasing demand for culturally relevant services across multiple regions. Additionally, the organization is navigating how to best serve the evolving needs of small business owners in a post-pandemic economy, where hybrid services, digital marketing

support, and access to capital remain critical. Despite these challenges, Renaissance remains committed to innovation and sustainability in pursuit of its mission.

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**Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:**

**a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.**

Services for small businesses.

**b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 275 5th Street is “C - No Historic Resource Present.” The building was found to be ineligible for the National Register, the California Register, or Local designation through a 2011 survey evaluation.



# EAST BAY TIMES

## Local News

LOCAL NEWS • News

### Share the Spirit: How to succeed in small business — meet the organization that helps make it happen

For decades, the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center has provided free help to struggling first-time business owners



Lilia Vizcaino, third from left, owner of El Tiny Cafe in Berkeley, Calif., stands with her employees Ray Mancilla, left, Ana Arevalo and Mireya Munoz on Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2023. Vizcaino, who worked as a janitor in the same location, opened her own restaurant with the help of the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center, which provides support, business training and counseling to help socially and economically diverse people open their own businesses and become financially self-sufficient. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



By [JOHN METCALFE](#) | [jmetcalfe@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:jmetcalfe@bayareanewsgroup.com) | Bay Area News Group  
PUBLISHED: December 14, 2023 at 6:15 AM PST | UPDATED: December 15, 2023 at 3:43 AM PST

For almost seven years, Lilia Vizcaino handled janitor duty at a coffee shop near UC Berkeley, cleaning up at closing time. But Vizcaino, who came to the U.S. from Mexico

and now lives in Albany, wanted something better for her family.

“I wanted stability, and I needed to do something else for the future,” she said.

Today Vizcaino no longer mops floors at a coffee shop. She owns her own, [El Tiny Cafe](#) in Berkeley. It’s a cute neighborhood joint that offers Americanos and iced horchata lattes, made with coffee beans sourced from women-owned farms in Mexico. The kitchen serves sandwiches, overnight oats and avocado toast with eggs and salsa macha — and boasts five stars on Yelp.

Vizcaino made it here with help from the [Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center](#), a business incubator with headquarters in San Francisco and satellite centers around the Bay. For the last four decades, Renaissance has helped people — 2,500 last year, with an emphasis on women, people of color, low-income folks and the formerly incarcerated — start small businesses. The group provides online training classes in English and Spanish, networking events, help with capital acquisition and one-on-one consulting with business experts.

“Entrepreneurship is a proven pathway into self-sufficiency and breaking the cycle of poverty,” said CEO Sharon Miller. “There are so many people who have great ideas, but they don’t know the business aspects of what to do to be successful. People aren’t born knowing how to do accounting or map distribution channels.”

In Vizcaino’s case, the center guided her through the tricky process of opening her first cafe. “I could never have made it without Renaissance,” she said. “During the pandemic, I had an adviser from there for almost a year telling me things like ‘Now you need to get a permit, do this and that,’ and keeping me on track.”

The center also helped Vizcaino draft a business plan, which she believes was crucial to getting a lease for her cafe. “When I presented it (to the landlord), it was a very good presentation with all this information that I had tailored to the neighborhood,” she said. “The guy liked that. He said, ‘You are not really good with your credit, but I like the business plan and the idea, and I think you can do it.’”

Renaissance hopes to raise \$10,000 through the East Bay Times’ [Share the Spirit](#) campaign, which provides relief, hope and opportunities for East Bay residents by helping raise money for nonprofit programs in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The funds will be used to deliver 10-week, Spanish-language courses for 30 lower income, Spanish-speaking individuals.

The courses will help these aspiring entrepreneurs build the skills, business acumen and support networks to become successful small business owners. Afterward eligible participants can apply for small business grants of \$5,000 to \$10,000 that Renaissance has already secured from the state of California.

Bay Area locals might be surprised at the familiar names that had a boost from Renaissance. There's the buzzy Poppy's Bagels in Oakland, the famous quesabirria spot, El Garage, in Richmond and Nana Joes Granola in grocery stores throughout California.

"If they have an idea, that's where we start with them," said Tatiana Hermeston, program manager at Renaissance's East Bay center. "They don't have to be in business. We can start them from pre-startup and get them through, as long as they have the grit and determination."

D'Andrea Robinson is the CEO of Queens Gettin' Lit!, a San Francisco curriculum program that helps Black girls develop literacy skills and gain exposure to positive Black history and culture. She relied on Renaissance to develop her business plan and focus her vision through one-on-one coaching.

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D'Andrea Robinson is the CEO of Queens Gettin' Lit!, a San Francisco curriculum program that helps Black girls develop literacy skills and gain exposure to positive Black history and culture. She relied on Renaissance to develop her business plan and focus her vision through one-on-one coaching.

"Let's first acknowledge that with being a Black woman CEO, there are systemic institutional barriers that are always at play as a new business owner, especially when it comes to finances," said Robinson. "Renaissance is truly a blessing, because I did not have a business plan prior to this course. There was a lot of information I didn't know and wouldn't have known, had I not been a member of the cohort."

Anita Leiva took business classes with Renaissance and won a grant that injected capital into Utku Kids, which makes Peruvian-inspired baby goods.

"Being an immigrant is a great challenge, and only our perseverance and effort to move forward opens the paths for us to move forward," Leiva said. "However, this path to

achieving our dreams becomes viable because there are organizations like Renaissance that unconditionally support communities like ours.”

Vizcaino is now comfortable enough at El Tiny Cafe that she’s thinking of starting a second enterprise – being a coach for other small-business owners.

“I would like to learn more to help other businesses like mine survive, because I see a lot of them close their doors,” she said. “I’ve started to take classes in marketing, and I want to translate for other people who only speak Spanish.”



# Small Business Commission

Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

March 23, 2026

## RENAISSANCE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER

*Application Number:* LBR-2025-26-032  
*Business Name:* Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center  
*Business Address:* 275 5th St.  
*District:* District 6  
*Applicant:* Chris Bailey, Communications and Development Manager  
*Nomination Date:* February 6, 2026  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Matt Dorsey  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### **Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center, currently located at 275 5th St.**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on March 23, 2026, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center.

**Legacy Business Program**  
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City Hall Room 140  
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Physical features or traditions that define the business:

- Long-standing traditions of bilingual, community-centered business training and one-on-one mentorship.
- Regular public marketplaces, networking events, and neighborhood-based partnerships.
- Collaboration with community groups, cultural districts, and local artists.
- Large-scale exterior murals.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Services for small businesses.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on March 23, 2026.

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Katy Tang  
Director

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

- Ayes –
- Nays –
- Abstained –
- Absent –

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# LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**HEARING DATE: March 18, 2026**

*Filing Date:* February 18, 2026  
*Case No.:* 2026-001631LBR  
*Business Name:* Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center  
*Business Address:* 275 5th Street  
*Zoning:* MUR – Mixed Use Residential Zoning District  
 130-CS Height and Bulk District  
*Cultural District:* SoMa Pilipinas Filipino Cultural District  
*Block/Lot:* 3733/030  
*Applicant:* Chris Bailey, Communications and Development Manager  
[cbailey@rencenter.org](mailto:cbailey@rencenter.org)  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Matt Dorsey  
*Located In:* District 6  
*Staff Contact:* Lauren Bihl – (628) 652-7498  
[lauren.bihl@sfgov.org](mailto:lauren.bihl@sfgov.org)

**Recommendation:** Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

## Business Description

Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center is a nonprofit organization founded in 1985 and headquartered at 275 5th Street in San Francisco’s South of Market neighborhood. For nearly forty years, it has equipped aspiring and established entrepreneurs—particularly women, immigrants, low-income individuals, and others with limited access to traditional resources—with culturally responsive business training classes and workshops, one-on-one advising, access to capital and markets, and long-term mentorship. All of which are served in English and Spanish. Serving thousands of small business owners each year across the Bay Area, Renaissance has helped launch and stabilize businesses that activate commercial corridors, create jobs, and strengthen San Francisco’s cultural and economic diversity. The organization’s stability is reinforced by long-tenured leadership, including CEO Sharon Miller, and a board-governed structure designed to ensure institutional continuity.

Renaissance was founded in 1985 by Walter Johnson and Michael S. Bernick to empower and support individuals in launching and growing small businesses. Michael S. Bernick is an attorney and longtime workforce policy leader whose career has focused on expanding access to employment, job training, and economic opportunity. He later

served as Director of California’s Employment Development Department from 1999 to 2004. Walter Johnson was a prominent San Francisco labor leader who served as the head of the San Francisco Labor Council for 19 years. Over a career spanning more than 50 years, he was an influential figure in local labor relations, advocating for workers' rights.

Renaissance plays a visible and influential civic role through its programming, partnerships, and physical presence. Its SoMa headquarters features two large-scale public murals (“Ani – Harvested Hopes” by Venazir Martinez and “Growth Within Ourselves” by Atlix Martinez) with a third mural in progress through a partnership with 1AM Projects and Levi Strauss & Co. These artworks celebrate immigrant histories, cultural identity, and community aspirations while reflecting Renaissance’s deep roots in neighborhood-based economic development. The organization regularly collaborates with major corporations, city departments, and community organizations, hosting marketplaces, networking events, and policy-focused initiatives that elevate small business voices. Renaissance and its clients are frequently featured in local media and professional publications, and the organization has received numerous honors, including Nonprofit of the Year at the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce’s 2024 Ebbie Awards and recognition among the Bay Area’s largest incubators and accelerators.

With diversified revenue streams, strategic planning, and a multi-site service model, Renaissance is structured for long-term sustainability beyond any single leader. A 2025 New Markets Tax Credit award is enabling important capital improvements at its SoMa facility and supporting organizational capacity building. Like many nonprofits, Renaissance faces rising operational costs, funding sources with strict requirements, and increasing demand for its services in a post-pandemic economy. Despite these challenges, its commitment to inclusive entrepreneurship remains strong. If Renaissance were to leave San Francisco, the city would lose one of its most trusted and comprehensive small business support institutions which has functioned as a launchpad and safety net for thousands of entrepreneurs and a cornerstone of the neighborhood-based economic vitality that defines San Francisco.

## Staff Analysis

### Review Criteria

#### 1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1985.

#### 2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center has operated continuously in San Francisco for 41 years.
- b. Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center has contributed to the history and identity of the South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

**3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art / craft / cuisine / tradition?***

Yes. Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center is associated with culturally significant public art and community traditions that reflect the histories and identities of the entrepreneurs it serves.

**4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and / or architecture?***

Yes. Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center and its building at 275 5th Street are closely associated with significant people, events, and cultural assets in San Francisco. The organization has been led for more than 25 years by CEO Sharon Miller, who was honored with an official City proclamation in 2024, and its early leadership included Michael S. Bernick and former Board Member Fiona Ma. Additionally, Mayor London Breed has served as the keynote speaker at its annual event, and other civic luminaries, including Scott Weiner, Mark Leno, David Chiu, and members of the Board of Supervisors, have attended and supported Renaissance's events. Renaissance's SoMa building is also home to major public murals ("Ani – Harvested Hopes" and "Growth Within Ourselves") created in partnership with local artists and cultural organizations; one mural received national recognition in 2025.

**5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?***

No.

**6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?***

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

**7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?***

Yes. Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center has been widely cited in published literature, newspapers, and professional media for its long-standing role in advancing inclusive entrepreneurship in San Francisco. Local outlets such as *NBC Bay Area*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *KQED*, *ABC7 News*, *Hoodline*, *Mission Local*, and *El Tecolote* have featured Renaissance's work, including coverage of its support for small business recovery during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Renaissance has also appeared on *Bay Area Focus* and is profiled in professional directories including GuideStar. Its history and early development are referenced in workforce and economic development literature, including publications by founding Executive Director Michael S. Bernick.

## **Racial and Social Equity Analysis**

On July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department's Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco's cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize

longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center strengthens San Francisco's cultural fabric by supporting the diverse entrepreneurs who shape the city's neighborhoods and cultural districts. As a long-standing community organization, Renaissance provides accessible training and mentorship to women, immigrants, and other underrepresented entrepreneurs whose businesses contribute to the city's identity, economic resilience, and cultural continuity. Its SoMa headquarters also features prominent community murals that celebrate immigrant histories and local heritage, serving as public landmarks. Through its programs, partnerships, and culturally rooted services, Renaissance helps ensure that San Francisco's diverse communities continue to thrive and be reflected in its small-business landscape.

### **Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business**

#### **Location(s) associated with the business:**

Current Locations:

- 275 5th Street (1997 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 490 2nd Street (1993 – 1997)
- 1453 Mission Street (1989 – 1992)
- 333 Valencia Street (1985 – 1989)

#### **Recommended by Applicant**

- Long-standing traditions of bilingual, community-centered business training and one-on-one mentorship
- Regular public market places, networking events, and neighborhood-based partnerships
- Collaboration with community groups, cultural districts, and local artists
- Large-scale exterior murals

### **Basis for Recommendation**

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement

- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
  - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
  - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
  - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO. ###

**HEARING DATE: March 18, 2026**

*Case No.:* 2026-001631LBR  
*Business Name:* Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center  
*Business Address:* 275 5th Street  
*Zoning:* MUR – Mixed Use Residential Zoning District  
 130-CS Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 3733/030  
*Applicant:* Chris Bailey, Communications and Development Manager  
 cbailey@rencenter.org  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Matt Dorsey  
*Located In:* District 6  
*Staff Contact:* Lauren Bihl – (628) 652-7498  
 lauren.bihl@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR RENAISSANCE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 275 5TH STREET, BLOCK 3733/LOT 030.

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on March 18, 2026, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center.

**Location(s) associated with the business:**

Current Locations:

- 275 5th Street (1997 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 490 2nd Street (1993 – 1997)
- 1453 Mission Street (1989 – 1992)
- 333 Valencia Street (1985 – 1989)

**Recommended by Applicant**

- Long-standing traditions of bilingual, community-centered business training and one-on-one mentorship
- Regular public market places, networking events, and neighborhood-based partnerships
- Collaboration with community groups, cultural districts, and local artists
- Large-scale exterior murals

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission’s findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2026-001631LBR to the Office of Small Business on March 18, 2026.

Jonas P. Ionin  
*Commission Secretary*

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: March 18, 2026