



where dreams become thriving businesses

2013

Women's Initiative for Self Employment is a nationally-recognized nonprofit that provides high-potential, low-income women with the training, funding, and ongoing support to start and grow their own business. The business management training, technical assistance, and financial services provided – in English and Spanish – improve the quality of life for women, their families and communities. Specifically, we help women achieve economic self sufficiency through entrepreneurship while they create jobs for themselves and others and build their neighborhoods into vibrant businesses communities.

Our services focus on low-income women because poverty is most widespread among women-headed households. While these women face many obstacles, they also have amazing abilities and attributes including strong work ethics, pride in the products or services they deliver, ingenuity, determination and a belief that a commitment must be honored. These characteristics make Women's Initiative clients ideal entrepreneurs and good credit risks. All they need is training, guidance and some financial assistance to become successful.

Women's Initiative's **culturally competent 11-week training course is unique** in providing the technical business training as well as addressing the barriers to success that low-income women face. Offered in both English and Spanish, women learn about setting prices, marketing, basic bookkeeping and other technical skills in addition to addressing self-esteem issues – all in a safe, supportive environment.

Women's Initiative has been serving aspiring female entrepreneurs for more than 25 years and has earned a reputation as **a trusted leader with proven impact**. Over the past 25 years, Women's Initiative has provided more than 26,000 women with quality services, helping them successfully launch businesses, increase their income and assets and create jobs. Our work has been nationally recognized by a number of institutions including The Presidential Award for Excellence in Microenterprise Development, the Urban Institute Best Practices Foundation and the Equal Rights Advocates.

Our urban hubs in San Francisco and Oakland provide training and support services to women throughout the Bay Area. **In 2012, we launched our training program in New York City**, offering classes in Manhattan and Brooklyn, and will continue with five additional classes in New York in 2013.

OUR MISSION is to build the entrepreneurial capacity of women to overcome economic and social barriers and achieve self-sufficiency.

WE ENVISION a future where women become the drivers of economic development and new job creation, and are leaders in their communities. We believe female entrepreneurs will help bring our country back to prosperity.

OUR GOAL is that every woman will know that she has the power to build assets, be safe and achieve prosperity. No woman in the United States will face economic insecurity. We will meet that goal by bringing our business training, funding and support program to high-potential, low-income women entrepreneurs in major cities throughout the country.



ABOUT

- Total years in business: **25**
- Total women served since founding: **26,000+**
- Women to be served in 2013: **2,027**
- Locations: **San Francisco, Oakland and New York.**

OUR CLIENTS

- 99% of program participants are low or extremely low-income
- 78% of program participants are women of color
 - 40% of clients are Latina
 - 28% of clients are African-American
- 21% are single parents
- 36% have a high school equivalency or less
- 13% have a documented disability
- 23% of our clients are over 50 years old

GRADUATE BUSINESSES

Graduates of our program are successfully running a wide range of businesses in high-growth industries including: leisure and hospitality, education, health and social services, retail trade, specialty manufacturing, and business services.

OUR RESULTS

- **Economic Security.** In the first year after training, clients nearly double their average annual individual income, from less than \$13,000 before training to more than \$25,000 one year after training. The percentage of clients who own a home also doubles two years after training. In the first two years after training, clients grow their average net household assets more than fourteen fold, from less than \$3,000 before training to nearly \$43,000 two years after training.
- **Business Growth.** Nationally, nearly all business growth in the past decades can be attributed to the increase in women-owned and immigrant-owned businesses. Five years after training 70% of Women's Initiative clients are self-employed, far exceeding the national average business survival rate. These clients average nearly \$150,000 in annual sales.
- **Job Creation.** One in four self-employed clients provides jobs for others through her business. On average, clients pay those who work for them nearly \$22 per hour, more than twice the minimum wage. Including the jobs clients created for themselves, this amounted to a total of 5,317 jobs created and retained by clients in 2012.
- **A sense of community.** Nearly two-thirds of clients surveyed (65%) made donations to charitable organizations. These clients donated an average of \$1,345 annually (\$685 in cash and \$660 in-kind). More than half of clients volunteer on a regular basis. On average these clients donate of 175 hours of their time annually.
- **Return on Investment.** For every \$1 invested in our program, \$30 is returned to the local economy as a result of clients' increased sales, increased income, job creation, and increased sales tax revenues spent locally.