

E. Jamaica Chamber of Commerce (W675)

August 19, 2009

- Grantee:** Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (the “Chamber”)
- ESD Investment:** A grant of up to \$115,000 to be used for soft costs associated with the development of the Jamaica Export Center (the “Center”).
- Project Location:** 157-11 Rockaway Blvd., Jamaica, Queens County
- NYS Empire Zone (or equivalent):** N/A
- Project Completion:** September 2009
- Grantee Contact:** Robert M. Richards, President
90-25 161st Street, Suite 505
Jamaica, NY 11432
Phone: (718) 657-4800 Fax: (718) 658-4642
- Project Team:**
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Project Management | Susan Shaffer |
| Affirmative Action | Laverne Poole |
| Environmental | Soo Kang |

Project Description:

Background

The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce is a 90-year-old not-for-profit organization serving south Queens by working to address the needs of local businesses. The Chamber has been involved in traditional areas such as retail and merchants programs and a leader in non-traditional areas such as employer benefit services, on-the-job training programs, traffic and transportation, commercial and economic development, airport liaison, and export document assistance.

When the Chamber initiated research on the freight forwarding industry in Queens, it found a steep decline and the loss of thousands of jobs, resulting from high operating costs, deteriorating roadways and inadequate parking. To address this, the Chamber created the Jamaica Export Center, located off-site near the John F. Kennedy International Airport, to facilitate efforts to stabilize, retain and expand the import/export industries, including importers/exporters, freight forwarders and customs brokers.

When the Center is completed this fall, its first floor will provide a one-stop shop to address the business and employment concerns of the export/freight forwarding industry. The floor will have a community room with high-speed Internet computer stations for educational programs, lectures, research, and job searches related to the freight forwarding industry. The second floor will house an eight-unit minority- and women-owned freight forwarding business incubator. The area will also include a receptionist and other office services. The

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Chamber will support companies for up to three years, at which point they should have the resources to become independent, allowing the Chamber to select new companies for incubation.

Since 2002, the ESD Directors have approved approximately \$680,000 in ESD assistance for the Chamber for costs related to the acquisition and construction of the Center. These funds, which have been fully disbursed, have been critical to the Center’s creation. The subject ESD grant will support soft costs associated with the final stages of constructing the Center, which will open this fall.

The Project

The construction of the Center required the Chamber to secure a line of credit and mortgage loans, resulting in monthly interest payments, and to pay property taxes and legal, accounting and consulting fees. During the two-year construction period, the Center focused on the construction process and the management of many different issues and concerns relating to the two-story, 8,000-square-foot building. The project is currently shifting from construction to certificate of occupancy status, and finishing details are underway. After the Center is completed, the Chamber will focus on outreach and research related to the implementation of the Center and intergovernmental affairs, leveraging the support services of a fully operational Center.

Upon completion of the project, the Grantee will furnish a final report describing the impact and effectiveness of the project.

Financing Uses	Amount	Financing Sources	Amount	Percent
Salaries/Fringe	\$73,800	ESD Grant	\$115,000	100%
Loan/Loan Interest/ Property Taxes/Rent	27,400			
Utilities/Phone/Administration/ Insurance/Travel	8,400			
Legal/Accounting Services	5,400			
Total Project Costs	\$115,000	Total Project Financing	\$115,000	100%

Statutory Basis – Community Projects Fund:

The project is authorized in the 2009-2010 New York State budget. No residential relocation is required as there are no families or individuals residing on the site.

Disclosure and Accountability Certifications:

The Grantee has provided ESDC with the required Disclosure and Accountability Certifications. Grantee’s certifications indicate that Grantee has no conflict of interest or good standing violations, and, therefore, staff recommends that the Corporation authorize the grant to the Grantee as described in these materials.