



NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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UNIVERSITY DISTRICT RECEIVES COMMUNITY ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION BOARD GRANT TO STUDY U INCUBATION VILLAGE

SPOKANE, Wash., September 25, 2024—The University District Public Development Authority (UDPDA) was awarded a \$75,000 Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) Grant to conduct a feasibility planning study to develop a U Incubation Village regional destination center. The grant scope will engage a new generation of business owners and promote a resilient regional food ecosystem.

The proposed concept for the U Incubation Village calls for a dynamic, multi-use neighborhood hub that reconnects the district with adjacent neighborhoods, creates jobs, celebrates place-based agricultural businesses, and supports local BIPOC makers and entrepreneurs.

Much like the Portland Mercado, a U Incubation Village folk market (to be operated by AHANA, Spokane's Multi-Ethnic Business Association) would consist of a community-driven outdoor market offering affordable retail space and business incubation services to diverse start-up businesses. Additionally, the U Incubation Village would launch programs such as a food processing plant, a relocated regional food hub and malting facility, a green jobs maker space village and reskilling center, a food waste upcycling plant, and a composting facility all in a historically distressed census tract.

“We are thrilled to be in a position to study the long-range feasibility of a multi-cultural market and agri-business center for the UD,” says Juliet Sinisterra, CEO. “Building an urban destination that celebrates our regional farmers, incubates local businesses, and creates living wage jobs is a priority for the district.”

The purpose of the grant is to develop a clear picture of the existing food ecosystem and needs around a regional food processing center; to determine market feasibility to support a folk market and business incubation center; to build relationships and trust with rural farmers, local BIPOC, and immigrant communities; and to outline a path forward to launch the project.

“The U Incubation Village concept ties in beautifully with Spokane County’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) goals by investing in downtown development and driving equitable economic development by targeting investments and resources in communities and populations that need them most,” says Gary Ballew, VP of Economic Development, Greater Spokane Inc. “We look forward to the results of this study and every opportunity to enhance economic diversification, equitable growth, multi-ethnic businesses, sustainable agriculture practices, and innovation in our community.”

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About the University District (UD): The University District is a place where business and education grow together to create a collaborative, healthy, and prosperous region. The University District uses its unique connectivity to create shared community wellness, equity, environmental health, and vibrancy by developing the infrastructure and programming that enable a globally recognized hub of education, innovation, research, and health care. Find out more at www.spokaneudistrict.org.

About AHANA: Learn more about [AHANA here](#).

About CERB Grants: Read more about the CERB grant awards in their [September 2024 Newsletter](#).