



LEDA

JOLIET LATINO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOC.

She Means Business

MARCH 20, 2026

Sponsorship Packet

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INTRODUCTION

The Joliet Latino Economic Development Association (LEDA) is proud to present She Means Business, our first Women in Business Panel. The event will take place on March 20, 2026, with a Vendor Fair from 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM open to the public, featuring women-owned and Joliet-based businesses. The panel runs from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM and will be ticketed, showcasing women from diverse industries sharing their experiences, lessons learned, and insights on leadership and growth.

Attendees can shop from local entrepreneurs, network, and gain valuable business insights. This event highlights the impact of women in business and provides a platform for connection, inspiration, and community support while giving vendors a chance to reach new customers.



Event Details

Friday, March 20, 2026

Location: Joliet Union Station

Vendor Fair (Open to the Public):
2:00 PM – 7:00 PM

She Means Business Panel
(Ticketed Event at Casa Catrina):
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

LEDA's She Means Business Panel celebrates the achievements of women entrepreneurs in Joliet, highlighting both the business owners and the women working behind the scenes to support family businesses. The event brings together business owners, professionals, community leaders, and engaged consumers, creating meaningful opportunities for connection, visibility, and impact.

Sponsors help make this event possible while supporting LEDA's ongoing programs that empower local entrepreneurs. Benefits include logo placement on event materials, program recognition, a presence at the vendor fair, advertising opportunities, and direct engagement with attendees. The vendor fair provides a unique platform to connect with local small businesses while visibly supporting women-owned enterprises. Partnering with LEDA demonstrates your commitment to uplifting women in our community and contributing to the success and sustainability of our events.



Sponsorship LEVELS



GOLD | \$1,500

- 1 table at the event
- Logo placement on the table, all marketing materials as presenting sponsor, and prominent logo placement at the event
- Opportunity to include branded items in event goodie bags
- This Sponsor will give opening remarks



SILVER | \$750

- 3 tickets
- Logo placement in all marketing material, opportunity to include items in goodie bags
- Participation in the Vendor Fair Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at 2:00 PM



BRONZE | \$250

- 1 ticket
- Logo placement at the table, digital marketing materials, and social media spotlight
- Opportunity to include items in attendee goodie bags



SMALL BIZ SPONSOR | \$100

- 1 ticket
- Prominent logo placement on digital materials

FIRST NAME:

LAST NAME:

PHONE #:

EMAIL:

BUSINESS NAME:

TOTAL DONATION:

NOTE: All sponsorship levels will include a LEDA Membership
Become a Sponsor at: <https://bit.ly/ledamarch2026>

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BUSINESSES SERVED

Of the 97 businesses we served in Joliet during 2025, 48% are women-owned. These entrepreneurs represent a powerful and growing segment of Joliet's local economy, driving job creation, innovation, and neighborhood revitalization. Women-owned businesses continue to be one of the fastest-growing sectors nationally, yet they often face disproportionate barriers to capital, mentorship, and market access.

48% WOMEN SERVED IN LEDA BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

47% STUDENTS ARE WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN THE FOOD VENDOR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

56% OF ACADEMIA DEL EXITO EMPRESARIAL STUDENTS ARE WOMEN

Through targeted programming, technical assistance, and community-driven events like this, LEDA helps close these gaps and accelerate sustainable growth. An investment in LEDA is an investment in measurable economic impact, increased business stability, and expanded opportunities for women entrepreneurs who are reinvesting in our local community.

OUR PANELISTS



Paulina Martinez, Panel Moderator

City of Joliet
Economic Development Director

Paulina Martínez, AICP, serves as the Economic Development Director for the City of Joliet. She leads efforts focused on business attraction and retention, redevelopment of city-owned properties, and advancing the River Edge Redevelopment Zone. Prior to joining Joliet, Paulina held economic development roles with World Business Chicago and the City of Evanston. She brings a deep appreciation for place, history, culture, and community to her work, helping drive thoughtful and strategic growth.

Alejandra Perez

Owner of LHB Studios

Alejandra is a licensed beauty professional, Master Artist, and Studio Owner committed to delivering a high-end, luxury experience to every client. She specializes in eyebrow treatments, lash enhancements, and professional education, blending precision and artistry in every service. As the owner of Lash House Bar, she has created a welcoming space for both clients and talented artists, built on excellence, attention to detail, and a passion for beauty.



Diana Alfaro

Illinois Department of Commerce &
Economic Opportunity
Latinx Business Development Manager

With over eight years of experience in community outreach and twelve years in federal regulatory compliance, she is a detail-oriented professional dedicated to expanding economic opportunity in marginalized communities. She currently serves as the State of Illinois Latinx Business Development Manager for the Office of Minority Economic Empowerment at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, supporting minority, women, veteran, and persons with disabilities-owned businesses statewide.



Melissa Martinez

CEO Cool Party Balloons

Melissa Martinez is an accomplished marketing executive with over 20 years of experience developing and leading strategic initiatives for B2C brands. Her expertise spans digital strategy, paid media, retail, analytics, product development, and brand partnerships. Passionate about innovation, Melissa turns bold ideas into impactful results through strong leadership and collaboration.



Additional panelists to be announced soon.

VENDOR FAIR

LEDA continues to play an important role in empowering local entrepreneurs and strengthening community connections. As part of this event, we will host a curated Women in Business Vendor Fair from 2:00 PM to 7:00 PM featuring 10 to 15 women-owned and Joliet-based businesses. Attendees will have the opportunity to shop directly from local entrepreneurs, creating a meaningful way to support small businesses and keep investment within our community.



Images are from past LEDA Events

This fair is designed to highlight the talent and impact of women business owners while also showcasing community resources that support and uplift women. In honor of Women's History Month, we are proud to create a space that celebrates leadership, entrepreneurship, and the continued growth of women in our local economy.

CONTACT US

If you are interested in sponsoring or have any questions, please contact us. We look forward to partnering with you to support women entrepreneurs and make this event a success.



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