

Small business group gets \$300K grant for tech center

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Valley Small Business Development Center president and CEO Debbie Raven

Union Bank announced on Tuesday a \$300,000 grant to the Valley Small Business Development Corporation to fund the first three years of the newly formed Technical Resource and Assistance Center.

The TRAC is located in downtown Fresno at the Downtown Business Hub and was created to assist small business owners in becoming loan-ready and provide technical assistance.

Julius Robinson, executive vice president and head of corporate social responsibility for Union Bank, reported the grant is the San Francisco-based bank's largest single special initiative funding.

"This facility will not only be a great place for small businesses to learn how to become better small businesses but it will also provide much-needed office space so small businesses can grow and thrive," Robinson said.

According to Debbie Raven, VSBDC president and CEO, the TRAC expects to counsel a minimum of 50 to 75 clients in the first year.

The underwriters for the VSBDC have more than 150 years of combined experience and more than half of the staff has either owned or operated a business.

"We understand how difficult it is to be profitable and viable in this economy," Raven said. "We understand the small business needs."

To date, the TRAC has counseled three clients who received loans totaling \$158,000.