

# MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope



## Features:

**Turning Challenges into Momentum: How Hannah Zhang Leads and Learns**

**Community Perspectives from the First Sears Site Walk Audit**

**This monthly E-Magazine is published by the Asian American Business Resilience Network to highlight Asian American small businesses' accomplishments.**

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## Asian American Business Resilience Network

### VISION

Envision a new reality that addressing historic inequities, and enhancing culturally/linguistically appropriate ways to thrive through resilience, sustainability, and inclusive growth for all members and the communities where they learn, live, play, and work.

### MISSION

AABRN radically accelerates the pace of change by disrupting the status quo; providing resources, training, and support; building bridges across diverse ecosystems; and bringing together public health and business networks, in order to achieve sustainable growth along with an equitable future.

### PROGRAMS

- Community Engagement and Translation Assistance, especially public health in nature
- Navigate local, state and national resources
- Access digital tools in advancing members' wellbeing
- Provide training to retain a healthy workforce
- Provide technical assistance in business operation and IT needs



## TURNING CHALLENGES INTO MOMENTUM: HOW HANNAH ZHANG LEADS AND LEARNS

*Interviewed By Meejoo Choi*

Hannah Zhang, MSF, serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Zepto Life Technology, a company redefining the landscape of diagnostic testing. Born and raised in Minnesota, Hannah spent most of her life in the state as part of a first-generation immigrant family. With a background in economics and finance, she graduated from the Labovitz School of Business and Economics at the University of Minnesota Duluth and later earned her Master of Science in Finance from the Rady School of Management at the University of California, San Diego. While she began in finance, Hannah was motivated to move into healthcare to create solutions that truly improve lives.

Zepto Life Technology is transforming the world of diagnostic testing by taking very complicated central lab tests—currently only available in select high-complexity laboratories—and condensing all of that capability into a small, tissue box-sized instrument along with a test cartridge about the size of an iPhone. This approach enables a “dummy testing workflow” that decentralizes access to highly sophisticated laboratory diagnostics, making it possible for clinics and care settings to run accurate tests quickly and easily. Their platform is powered by innovative technologies such as Giant Magnetoresistance (GMR) working principles, on-chip bio-surface technology, fully automated assays, and nanomagnetic particle beads, allowing for minimally invasive, scalable, and multiplex testing.

## Doing Hard Things and the Right things

A big influence on Hannah's life and leadership comes from her upbringing as the child of a first-generation immigrant family from China. She describes the values she learned as both simple and powerful: perseverance, hard work, and doing the right thing, even when it isn't easy. As she put it, it's about "doing hard things and the right thing—continuing to do it until meaningful impact is achieved." Growing up in Minnesota, she was surrounded by the mindset that challenges are part of the journey and that lasting results take time and dedication. This perspective has shaped how she approaches her role at Zepto Life Technology, driving her to build solutions that not only advance technology but also serve people and communities in lasting ways.

### Zepto's Technology:

#### Unprecedented Turnaround Time w/ Pristine Sensitivity

Zepto utilizes Giant Magnetoresistance (GMR), a 2007 Nobel prize winning technological development to bring cutting edge diagnostic precision to the point of care.



\*Not for sale in the U.S.

#### Sensitivity

Zepto's technology leverages GMR technology to achieve an astonishing molecular sensitivity of > 95%

#### Turnaround Time

Zepto's technology can achieve higher sensitivity with a turnaround time of < 90 minutes

#### Multiplex

Zepto's innovations will allow for 36-plex uninterfered multiplex molecular detection

## Bringing Awareness to a Hidden Health Crisis

One thing Hannah wishes more people knew about Zepto Life Technology is the urgent health problem their first diagnostic application is designed to address: invasive fungal infections. She explained that many people have never heard of these infections, yet they are extremely serious and can quickly overwhelm patients with weakened immune systems, such as those undergoing cancer treatment or organ transplants. Every year in the United States, about 20 million people are immunocompromised and at high risk for these infections. Alarming, around 700,000 cases occur annually—slightly fewer than the number of strokes—and about half of these patients do not survive. There are even three times more invasive fungal infections each year than breast cancer cases. By developing faster, easier diagnostic tools, Hannah hopes to bring more awareness to this overlooked health crisis and help save more lives.

The Problem with IFIs

## The Hidden Pandemic

**3.7 Million**

deaths attributed to IFIs each year  
worldwide

**\$6.7 Billion**

in direct medical costs are associated with  
IFIs

**~20 Million**

people at high risk for IFIs in the U.S. alone

| Zepto aims to disrupt current fungal diagnosis with results in less than 90min.

Emily Rayens, Karen A Norris, Prevalence and Healthcare Burden of Fungal Infections in the United States, 2018, Open Forum Infectious Diseases, Volume 9, Issue 1, January 2022.

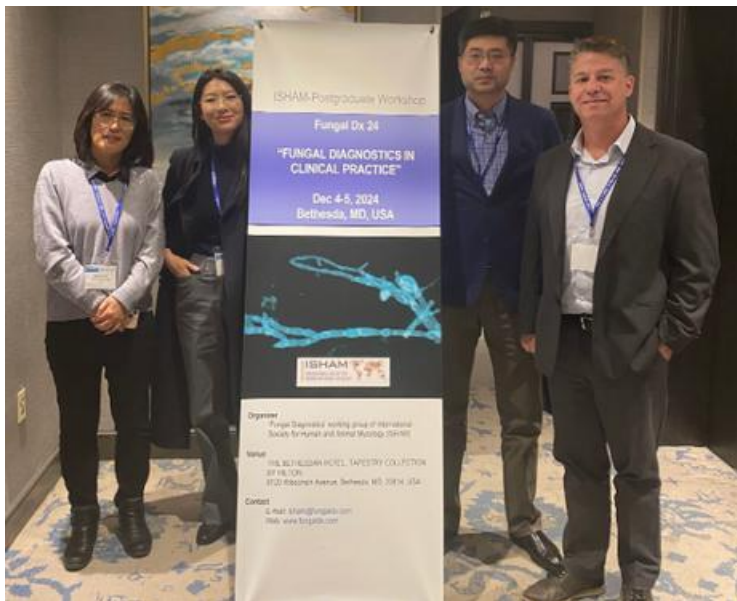
### A New Path in Healthcare: Supporting Underserved Communities

Hannah's path into healthcare took shape during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, which changed the trajectory of her career. She joined Zepto Life Technology at a time when testing resources were scarce and communities were in urgent need of help. Working alongside a talented team, she helped establish a diagnostics laboratory that brought critical testing to underserved groups, including senior centers and small school districts that often struggled to access timely support. A few years later, the unexpected passing of Zepto's founder and CEO created a moment of uncertainty for the company. Hannah's dedication and leadership during the crisis stood out to stakeholders, ultimately leading to her appointment as CEO. While her financial background made the move unconventional, she believes it also brought valuable perspective, reminding the team that for any strategy to be sustainable, it must also make financial sense.

### The Power of Asking: How Resourcefulness Drives Success

When reflecting on how she built her network and expertise, Hannah emphasized the importance of being resourceful and unafraid to ask for help. She believes no one starts out with all the answers, and that finding the right people is essential to tackling the constant challenges of building an organization. Early on, she admitted she sometimes hesitated to reach out to experts, thinking, for example, that a professor at Stanford wouldn't be interested in speaking with her. But she quickly learned that those doubts were only in her head—most people were glad to connect and share their knowledge. By simply asking, she discovered that the worst response she could get was a polite "no," and often, it led to meaningful conversations and

valuable guidance. This mindset of reaching out, learning, and bringing in the right expertise has been a key part of her journey with Zepto Life Technology.



## Turning Challenges into Momentum: Growing Through Learning

Hannah shared that one of the biggest challenges in leading Zepto Life Technology was the steep learning curve of working in a highly technical field without a scientific background. She had to quickly absorb complex knowledge in chemistry, physics, engineering, and clinical care—topics she hadn't studied before. For example, she admitted she hadn't even heard of invasive fungal infections until she began this work. Compared to someone who came into the role with years of technical training, she faced extra hurdles. What made the difference, she said, was simply talking to people, reaching out to subject matter experts, and being a good listener. By asking questions and staying open to learning, she was able to grow her understanding and lead the company forward.

## Tips from Hannah Zhang for Aspiring Healthcare Entrepreneurs

When asked what advice she would share with others hoping to start a business in the healthcare and diagnostics field, Hannah was candid about the realities of entrepreneurship. She explained that being part of a startup is a true roller coaster, filled with exhilarating highs when everything falls into place and deep lows when technical challenges arise and there are no immediate answers. As the person leading the company, she has felt both extremes firsthand. One resource she wishes she had discovered earlier is the book called "The Hard Thing About Hard Things" by Ben Horowitz, which describes how there are really only two moods in entrepreneurship: euphoria and terror. For anyone starting out, her advice is to expect the ups and downs, stay resilient, and remember that persistence and openness to learning will carry you through both.



**Preface:** The Asian American Business Resilience Network has teamed up with Asian Media Access to co-develop the St. Paul Sears Site, we will publicize a series of articles to highlight our progress.

**Series of SEARS Redevelopment - Article #18**

## **VOICES ON EVERY STEP: COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIRST SEARS SITE WALK AUDIT**

In collaboration with REACH and other local partners, Asian Media Access (AMA), AABRN, and FRBCA successfully launched and completed their first Walk Audit effort to assess and improve walkability in the area.

This initiative is designed to assess walkability and active transportation by having volunteers explore the areas surrounding the site in all directions—sidewalks, crossings, bike routes, and transit access—to identify what’s working well and where improvements are needed to support safer walking, cycling, and transit connections. The audits also serve as a tool for gathering community insight,



engaging local residents—especially youth, elders, and people with mobility challenges—to share their perspectives through photos, videos, and form-based feedback. This input will directly inform both short-term enhancements, such as pop-up crosswalks and protected bike lanes, and long-term infrastructure planning that reflects the community’s priorities.

### **Why Walk the North and East Routes—and What Did We Discover?**

On June 26, 2025, the first Walk Audit explored the north and east routes surrounding the former Sears site. Along the North Route, observers examined pedestrian flow and safety at the Capitol Rice Transit Station, walking through Rice Street, Aurora Avenue, Fuller Avenue, University Avenue, and the Capitol Campus to document signage, crosswalks, and overall accessibility. The group also assessed the nearby business corridor for its commercial viability and ease of access for people traveling on foot or by transit. The East Route focused on Rice Street and its connection to the Capitol grounds, highlighting concerns about midblock crossings, bus stop safety near MnDOT, limited bike lanes, and inconsistent curb ramps and signage. Together, these observations provided valuable insights into how infrastructure improvements could better support safe, active transportation for all community members.



### **Documenting Barriers and Opportunities for Safer Mobility**

A total of eight St. Paul neighbors joined the Walk Audit, bringing diverse perspectives and experiences to the conversation. As they moved through the routes, participants reflected on how easy it is to navigate the area—considering whether sidewalks are clear and connected, and if crossings feel safe and visible. They also evaluated how welcoming the space feels, looking for features like seating, shade, and clear signage. Throughout the walk, the group discussed who the area currently serves—and, just as importantly, who it might be leaving out.

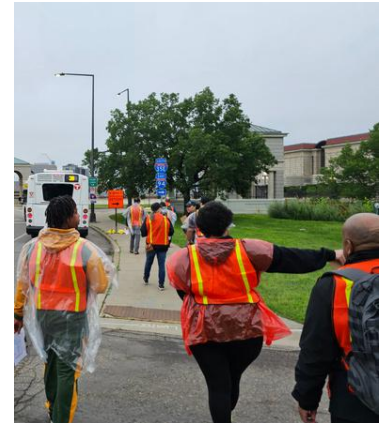
To guide direct feedback, participants were asked three key questions:

- Access: How would you like to reach this site—walking, bicycling, bus, light rail, or car?

- **Equitable Access:** What improvements would make you more likely to walk, bike, or take transit here? (e.g., safer crossings, better sidewalks, improved bike parking, more frequent transit)
- **Services and Retail:** What types of businesses or activities would you want to see? (e.g., grocery stores, restaurants, parks, healthcare, education)

## Listening to the Community: Key Takeaways on Access and Retail Needs

Survey feedback was collected from six participants, offering insights across three key areas. For access preferences, most respondents indicated a desire to reach the site by walking (mentioned by four participants), while half preferred biking, and a few also mentioned using public transit or driving. In terms of improving equitable access, the most frequently suggested changes included creating safer bike paths (noted by four respondents) and larger crosswalks to better protect children (three). Additional ideas included cleaner sidewalks, better lighting, slower traffic supported by more stoplights, and added speed bumps. Regarding desired services and retail, participants expressed interest in housing options and a nursing home (each cited by two people), along with a light rail connection to nearby hotels. Others highlighted the need for everyday amenities such as restaurants, a fitness center, entertainment venues, arcades, and grocery stores. Across all responses, there was a consistent emphasis on cleaner sidewalks and improved biking infrastructure to support safe, active transportation.



## Upcoming Plans for Inclusive Redevelopment

The first Walk Audit provided valuable perspectives on how the former Sears site and its surrounding streets can better serve the community. Feedback underscored the importance of creating safer crossings, expanding bike infrastructure, and ensuring that sidewalks and public spaces feel clean, welcoming, and accessible to all. Participants also shared a vision for a vibrant mix of housing, essential services, and neighborhood amenities that would draw people to the area and support daily life. The team recently completed the second day of the Walk Audit and will soon begin compiling the valuable insights gathered from the community. The thoughtful feedback shared by participants will help shape plans for a safer, more connected, and inclusive neighborhood. To learn more, visit the St. Paul Sears Redevelopment's [Facebook page](#) or [website](#).

*June 26 & July 10*

## SEARS WALK AUDIT

In partnership with REACH and other local organizations, AABRN, along with AMA and FRBCA, completed its first Walk Audit to assess walkability in the area. Volunteers explored sidewalks, crossings, bike routes, and transit access, while community members shared feedback through photos, videos, and surveys. This input will help guide future improvements for safer and more connected streets.



June 28 ~ 29

## LITTLE MEKONG NIGHT MARKET 2025

The Little Mekong Night Market brought together Minnesota's original night market experience. This two-day event featured vibrant cultural performances, dance competitions, local artists and makers, and a wide variety of food and beverage vendors. It was a lively celebration of community, creativity, and Asian culture that welcomed thousands to enjoy the summer weekend. Photo Courtesy: Little n Mekong and Harry Vue Media



June 29 ~ July 6

## RATHA JATRA (YATRA) CELEBRATIONS

As part of this year's Ratha Yatra celebrations, the Hindu Society of Minnesota offered Chhappan Bhog, a beautiful offering of 56 vegetarian dishes prepared with devotion and care. We are grateful for the opportunity to witness and uplift this sacred tradition. Swipe through for a glimpse of the divine flavors and joyful spirit shared by the community. Photo Courtesy: Hindu Society of Minnesota



July 4

# INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

Our partner - Asian Media Access were excited to celebrate Independence Day with our community at Red, White & BOOM!, the city's largest and most beloved Fourth of July event hosted by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. It was a wonderful night on the downtown riverfront, filled with vibrant fireworks, joy, and togetherness.



July 11 ~ 13

## PANDA FEST

Panda Fest, held at the MOA North Lot in Bloomington, Minnesota, was one of the largest outdoor Asian food festivals in the United States. The event featured over 100 food vendors, more than 300 street food options, and 30 merchandise booths. Visitors enjoyed live cultural performances and a variety of panda-themed activities, including inflatables, face painting, DIY crafts, and more. It was a fun-filled celebration of Asian culture for all ages. Photo Courtesy: Panda Fest - Twin Cities



July 12

## ANMN SUMMER MELA 2025

ANMN Summer Mela 2025 was a celebration of culture, connection, and community. This cherished annual event brought together the Nepali community and friends from all backgrounds to enjoy the rich flavors of Nepal, including favorites like momo, sel roti, chhoyla, pani puri, and more, many of which were lovingly prepared by local families. Photo Courtesy: Association of Nepalis in Minnesota - ANMN



July 19

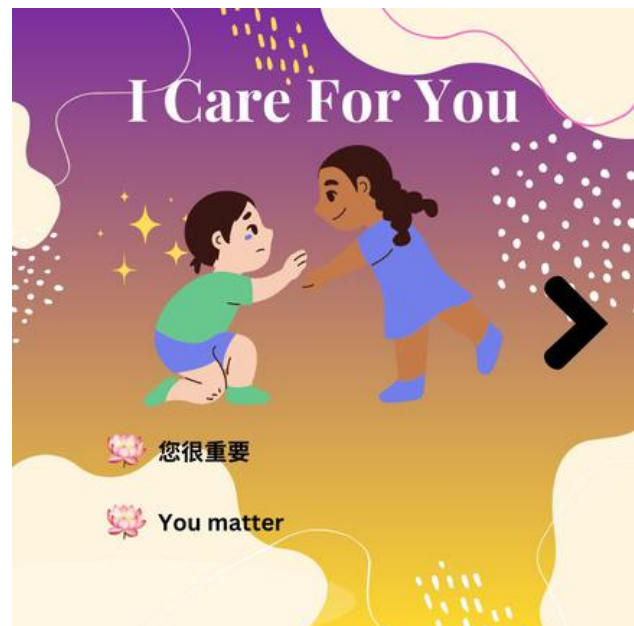
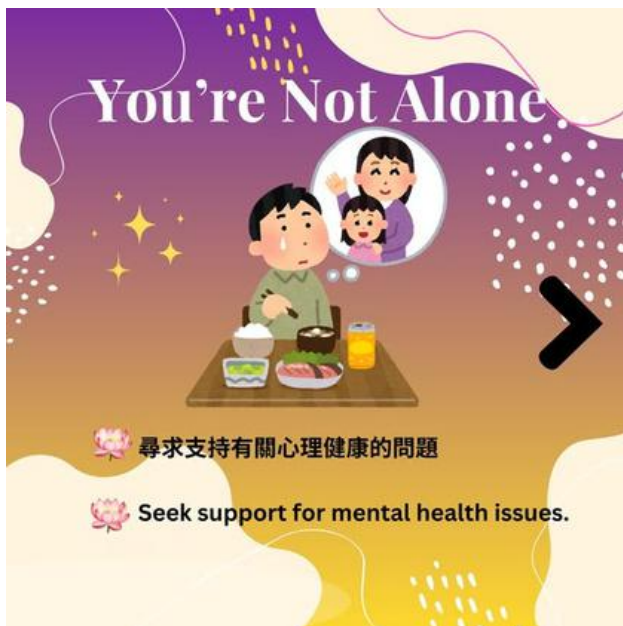
## CSFA PHILIPPINE DAY 2025

The Cultural Society of Filipino Americans (CSFA) hosted the 37th Philippine Day, Minnesota's largest gathering of Filipinos and Filipino Americans. The celebration featured traditional food, music, dance, a parade, exhibits, the Little Miss Philippine Day pageant, and a variety of vendors and community activities, bringing the rich culture of the Philippines to the heart of Minnesota. Photo Courtesy: Cultural Society of Filipino Americans - Minnesota



## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS FLYERS

Asian Media Access has created a set of mental health heritage story cards. If you are in need of crisis support contact the text line by texting MN to 741741.





## We can help you find your focus

Building a budget that actually works.  
Growing your network organically.  
Mastering work/life balance. All this  
and more with Digital Ready. What will  
your focus be?

Check it out



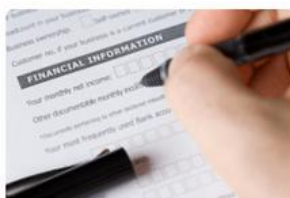
## BUDGETING TIPS AND NETWORKING KNOW-HOW

Struggling with budgeting, networking, or work-life balance? Digital Ready can help you find your focus and achieve your goals. Discover expert insights and practical tools to streamline your success at:

[https://link.digitalready.verizonwireless.com/OTk2LUtXQy0zNzcAAAGZKn5A0-kz96GrTzwrOAAOnZ\\_2TNNWrU\\_BQXIGWbjvQHw\\_pjs1hSTgctExNiFQleIF4R3PHE=](https://link.digitalready.verizonwireless.com/OTk2LUtXQy0zNzcAAAGZKn5A0-kz96GrTzwrOAAOnZ_2TNNWrU_BQXIGWbjvQHw_pjs1hSTgctExNiFQleIF4R3PHE=)

Find the event that fits your goals:

<https://digitalready.verizonwireless.com/category/events>



Event • Ask the Expert

Writing grants

Jul 28, 11:00 am-1:00 pm



Event • Ask the Expert

Joyful Budgeting (Part 2 of 4): Outline Your Budget to Achieve Your...

Jul 28, 2:00 pm-4:00 pm



Just added

Event • Ask the Expert

Grow your LinkedIn network

Aug 11, 11:00 am-1:00 pm



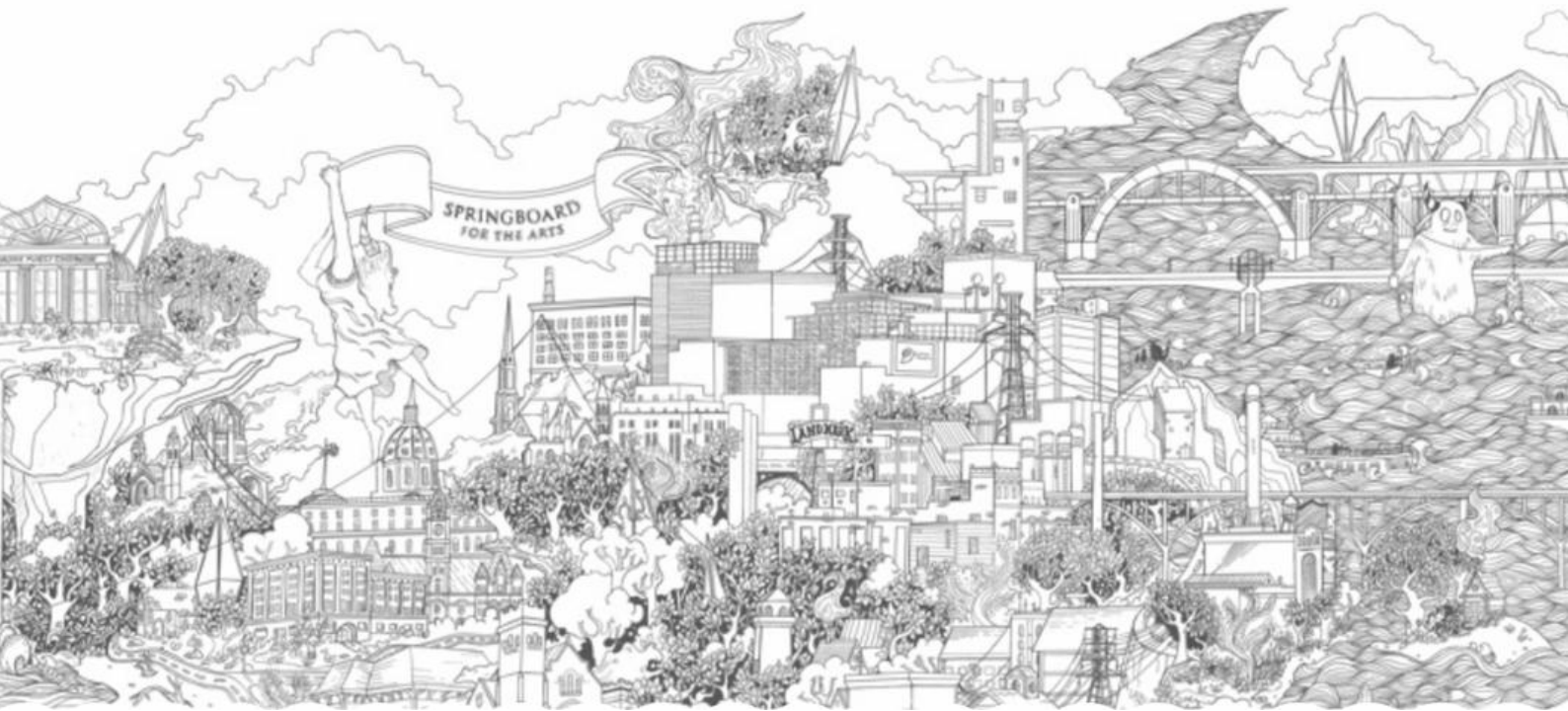
Just added

Event • Networking Sessions

Small business chat: Waxery, Jetta V Ent., LLC

Aug 13, 12:00 pm-1:00 pm





## Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- August 1, 2025 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm - Lightroom Classic Developing Basics
- August 6, 2025 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm - Virtual Legal Clinic for Creatives
- August 20, 2025 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm - Building Financial Resiliency
- September 3, 2025 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm - Work of Art: Career Planning – SEMAC
- October 1, 2025 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm- Work of Art: Time Management – SEMAC

Learn more and register at: <https://springboardforthearts.org/events/>

## Additional Resources

- Get connected to Artist Career Consultants here:  
<https://springboardforthearts.org/professional-growth/career-consultations/artist-career-consultants/>
- Work of Art Toolkit: <https://springboardforthearts.org/woa>
- Handbook for Artists Working in Community:  
<https://springboardforthearts.org/artists-working-in-community/>

## Tax Tips from the IRS



- [Here's what taxpayers need to know about business related travel deductions](#)
- [Companies who promise to eliminate tax debt sometimes leave taxpayers high and dry](#)
- [Get an Identity Protection PIN](#)
- [Tax Resources for Members of the Military](#)



JULY  
**22**  
1pm~2pm

## Deep Dive into Entity-Owned/8(a) and HubZone Applications

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JULY  
**24**  
1pm~2pm

## Brand Building to Secure Funding

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JULY  
**25**  
1pm~2pm

## Growth Capital That Doesn't Cost You

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

AUG  
**5**  
1pm~2pm

## Grant Writing and Storytelling: Turn Mission Into Momentum

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



AUG

7

1pm~2pm

## Preparing for MySBA Certification

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

AUG

12

1pm~2pm

## Mentor Protégé & Empower to Grow Programs

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

AUG

19

11am~12pm

## Build a Business That Grows Itself

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

AUG

22

12pm~1pm

## The Power of Brand Consistency and Its Impact on Your Bottom Line

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



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