

Focus On Women-Owned Businesses:
WEAP Helps People Become Self-Sufficient
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For 16 years Ethel Long-Scott has led the Women's Economic Agenda Project (WEAP) in its belief that poor people are innovators, risk-takers, natural marketing moguls and entrepreneurs who just need the tools, the skills and the resources to launch their visions and dreams.

Ethel has spent many years listening to impoverished women and their families. She understands their concerns and is determined to help.

The programs at WEAP are designed to engage the shut-out and left out women and men in programs that build leadership skills and assist individuals in grabbing the reigns of their destiny. WEAP's ability to turn hopes into reality is a culmination of years of teamwork and planning to build the kind of organization that can help direct and shape the gifts of human potential regardless of race, gender or economic status.

Just five years ago, Ethel and her staff developed a multi-layer economic development program with a goal of assisting low-income women and families become self-sufficient. The organization put forth a strategic plan that revitalized the organizational infrastructure as well as developed services that include training and microenterprise development.

Moving to a new headquarters was the first step in the plan. WEAP renovated the building at 449 15th Street in downtown Oakland and renamed it the Women's Atrium Building. This involved a team of employees, volunteers and professionals working together to design and construct a state-of-the-art facility. The result is a stunning setting of classrooms and work areas equipped with the latest in high-speed wiring, Internet access and teleconferencing capabilities.

A critical component of the new building is the Women & Family Center, which encompasses several programmatic elements.

"WEAP is looking for ways to link arms with partners who share our belief in people and their potential," says Ethel. "We welcome those who are willing to assist us in ensuring that poor women and their families have opportunities that are alive, exciting, challenging and ever expanding."