

Milpa Grille - LEEAF Profile



Tauger, M. (2019, November 19). Milpa Chicken Bowl [Photograph].

<https://www.latimes.com/food/story/milpa-grille-boyle-heights>

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LEEAF Fellowship

August 3, 2021

Word Count: 1,119

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Profile:

A business in East LA with BIPOC woman-owned that can benefit from the LEEAF accelerator program would be Milpa Grille. Milpa Grille is Mesoamerican-inspired cuisine located in Boyle Heights. With an all-female kitchen crew, Desyi Minera Serrano brings more healthful and affordable food to the neighborhood of Boyle Heights.

At Milpa Grille, they pay homage to their ancestors and practice of milpa by featuring core ingredients on their menu. They also reimagine traditional Mesoamerican food and share this with the community. When discussing this business' impact on its surrounding community, they are actively involved with the community and other small businesses.

Regarding highlighting small businesses, they host two other small businesses: [Macheen](#) and [Cafe Cafe Mobile coffee](#). Further discussing their community impact, they host the Boyle Heights community fridge. Even more, when it came to census participation, they gave free meals to encourage participation.



Furthermore, to discuss this business's impact on the surrounding community, they have given out free food for frontline workers. Another important thing to highlight is that they seem to repost events in the community and support other small businesses on their [Instagram](#). So, it is clear to see community engagement and, most notably, support of the community.

LEEAF Benefits:

Although they already have an established social media presence, I believe it can still need more work when looking at this specific business. When looking at their primary form of social media, Instagram, there seems to be a lack of advertisement for their business. They have an established Linktree in the bio of their Instagram, which links to the kitchen menu, an ordering system for pick up, a small business competition, and support for another small business they host. These things seem great, but I think the small business competition and support for another small business are outdated. Instead, it should link to the other small businesses they host and maybe some information on the community fridge since it is at their location and the reason it's operating correctly.

When thinking of the business operations, since they are the host of two other small businesses, they are set up with their separate employees. When I've gone and ordered from milpa grille and the other hosted business Macheen, I had to do two separate transactions, although not so efficient; it got the job done. I didn't have an issue with doing different transactions since they are two different entities, but this might not always be the case for different customers. Overall the support of LEEAF can further assist this



well-established restaurant in improving its marketing, social media presence and overall help with future growth.

As cliché as it may sound, I love supporting small businesses, but this one stood out to me because my mentor took me there and introduced me to the hidden gem that exists in Boyle Heights. After going that one time, I followed and kept up to date with their participation in the community. However, I live in El Sereno, and this business is in Boyle Heights; it's close to my sister's house, so it's always lovely to visit the business and see how



it's changed since first going. In the most recent year with COVID, they have established an outdoor seating area which allows for more diners and attraction to the restaurant.

This restaurant is unique for many reasons, especially since the mesoamerican-inspired food is affordable, healthy, and different. This restaurant is also unique because it hosts two other small businesses; and how informative they are of community events. The unique approach of community and politics that Milpa Grille represents is also essential to acknowledge; as I briefly discussed earlier, giving free food when filling out the census. They also repost or post about voting and are generally aware of the political issues that impact the community. When it comes to their generosity, they have donated freshly cooked meals for heroes and teachers and highlight the importance of

community. But, another thing that makes the restaurant and owner stand out is that Desyi Minera Serrano is the 2020 recipient of the Fund Latina Food Jefas from El Pollo Loco and

We All Grow Latina. This

10k grant has allowed Milpa

Grille to continue to be

donation-based, giving back

to the community and

allowed or the community to

be united and sustainable.

These principles are precise

what owner Desyi

envisioned when first

starting her business. She

continues to show this with

the work she's done and

continues to do with the community fridge and donation of food for others. When looking at

a small business whose primary focus is to give back to the community with either affordable

food or free food for those who need it, this business excellently does this.



Process:

The process that I used to complete this assignment dealt with doing basic research on this business, exploring the articles written about it, and visiting the restaurant to see how it functions and runs. When it came to reaching out to Milpa Grille, I didn't get a response from their website contact box. I left information regarding LEEAF, and here is the contact info if needed:

Tel: 323-269-2995
Email: info@milpagrille.com

I learned from this project that a business's mission statement and the actions a business takes to uphold their idea of what they want to be and how they plan to contribute to their neighborhood is essential to discover a small business. Essentially being active in the neighborhood draws attention and media articles that help with profits and show the community that this business isn't a threat. When it comes to other small businesses in the past, some people haven't been happy about the gentrification or how this may actively harm neighboring people and surrounding businesses; or that's what past protests of new businesses entail.

However, in the case of Milpa Grille, the owner Desyi has stuck to her original idea of affordable healthy food and continues to stem this message along with what she hosts in the restaurant. This ideology is actively apparent in the posts and reposts of political issues that impact the community and further shows that she is involved in the community; since she is a committee member for the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council. Things like this are essential to know when profiling a small business because it allows us to see if the business is either helping or hurting a community. If so, how do local people who've grown up there view this business, and how can it possibly shift so it is in the best interest of others? Although this might not be what the prompt meant when asked what I learned, that is what I learned about this whole profile. I learned that this business helps the community and is

accepted with open arms when other businesses who try to set up in Boyle heights weren't as lucky. Milpa Grille is a prime example of what it means to put people over profits. So it would be in the best interest of LEEAF to support this specific BIPOC Women Entrepreneur as it sees fit.