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Empowering Local Youth: 3CORE and DCBA Open Applications for High School Entrepreneurs at the 2026 Thursday Night Market

CHICO, CA — For the third consecutive year, **3CORE** and the **Downtown Chico Business Association (DCBA)** are joining forces to empower the next generation of business leaders through the **Young Entrepreneur Initiative (YEI)** at Downtown Chico's Thursday Night Market.

This year's program, sponsored by **Tri Counties Bank**, marks a significant expansion in both scale and focus. The initiative is currently seeking up to **20 high school entrepreneurs** from Butte, Glenn, and Tehama counties to showcase their goods and services in a dedicated "Young Entrepreneur" section of the market.

Selected students will receive a sponsored booth for a four-week residency (April 23 – May 14). This partnership removes the financial barrier of entry for young creators, providing them with:

- Physical booth space at the iconic Thursday Night Market.
- Professional one-on-one business coaching and resources from 3CORE staff.
- A mandatory orientation to learn the "ins and outs" of retail and market operations.
- Extensive social media and local media promotion.

While the program has welcomed various ages in the past, the 2026 initiative is placing a special spotlight on current high school students.

"We want to give these students a real-world laboratory to test their ideas," says Luis Moreno, Assistant Director at 3CORE. "By providing them with a platform at the Thursday Night Market, we aren't just teaching them how to sell; we're showing them that their community believes in their potential."

Applications are officially open but the clock is ticking. Students must submit their applications by **March 13**. Interested applicants can find the youth-specific application and eligibility requirements at https://www.downtownchico.com/event-young-entrepreneurs-initiative_655.htm

The organizers are also calling on the local community to mark their calendars. "The best way to support these students is to show up," says Celeste Cramer, General Manager at DCBA. "We invite everyone to visit the YEI section starting April 23rd to see the incredible talent, creativity, and drive our local youth have to offer."

Key Dates:

- **Application Deadline:** March 13
- **Program Dates:** Every Thursday, April 23 – May 14
- **Location:** Downtown Chico Thursday Night Market

About 3CORE

3CORE is a private, non-profit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and federally recognized Economic Development District serving Butte, Glenn, and Tehama counties. Since 1985, 3CORE has served as a financial intermediary, connecting local businesses and communities with the essential funding, mentoring, and strategic initiatives necessary for growth. By forming partnerships with private, non-profit, and public organizations, 3CORE works to cultivate healthy businesses, create and retain local jobs, and foster long-term community resilience throughout Northern California. Learn more at www.3coreedc.org.

About Downtown Chico Business Association (DCBA)

The Downtown Chico Business Association (DCBA) is a 501(c)4 non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the vitality and preservation of Downtown Chico. Through community events like the Thursday Night Market, advocacy, and marketing initiatives, the DCBA supports local businesses and ensures that Downtown Chico remains the cultural and economic heart of the region.

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