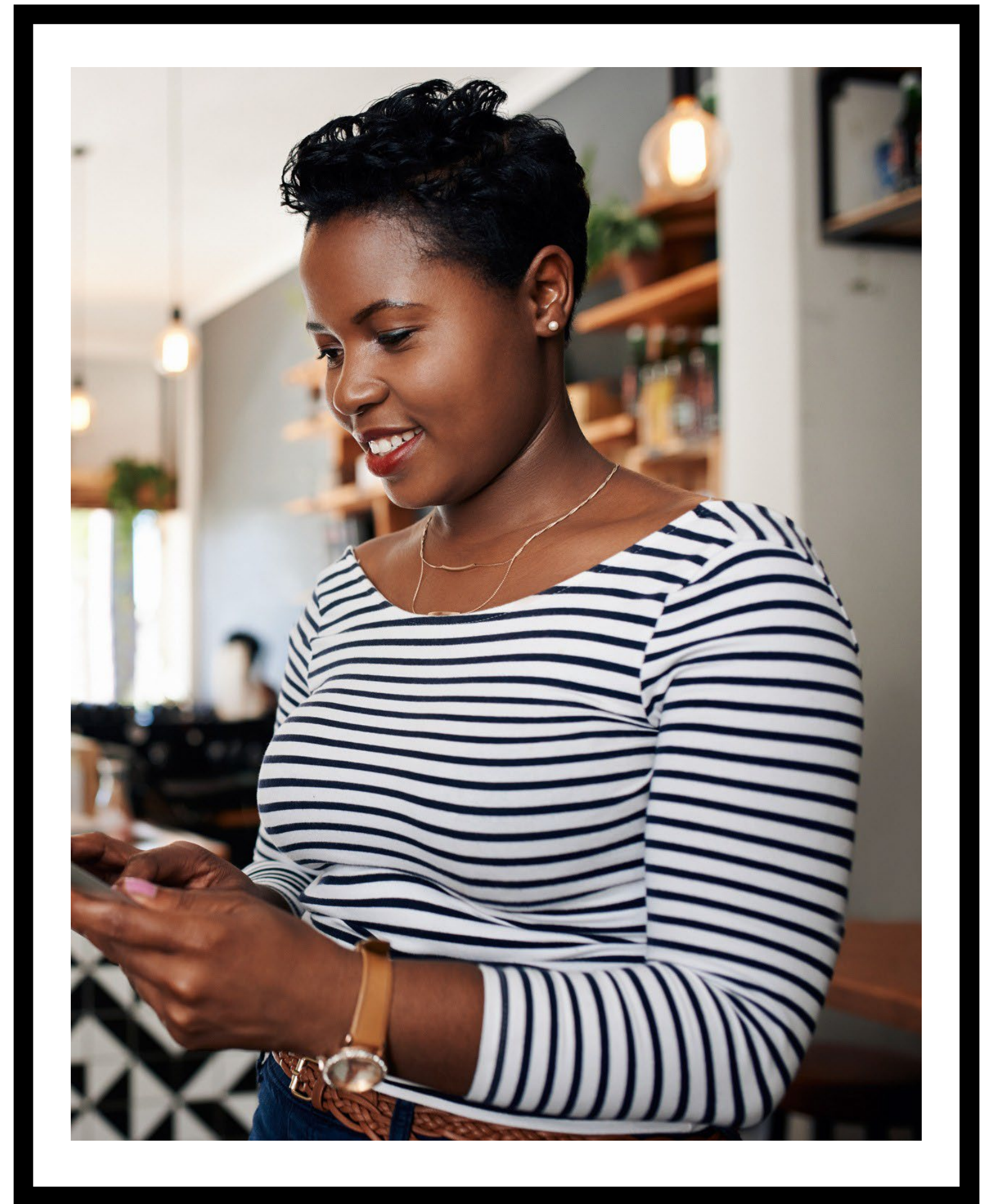


CALIFORNIA SMALL BUSINESSES & ESSENTIAL WORKERS

CLOSING EQUITY GAPS THROUGH UPSKILLING

WENDA TEJAMO



INTRODUCTION:

The COVID19 pandemic created a new term for the frontline workers risking their health to support the core functions of the economy. These "essential workers" supported the nation at its most critical time and often, for low wages.

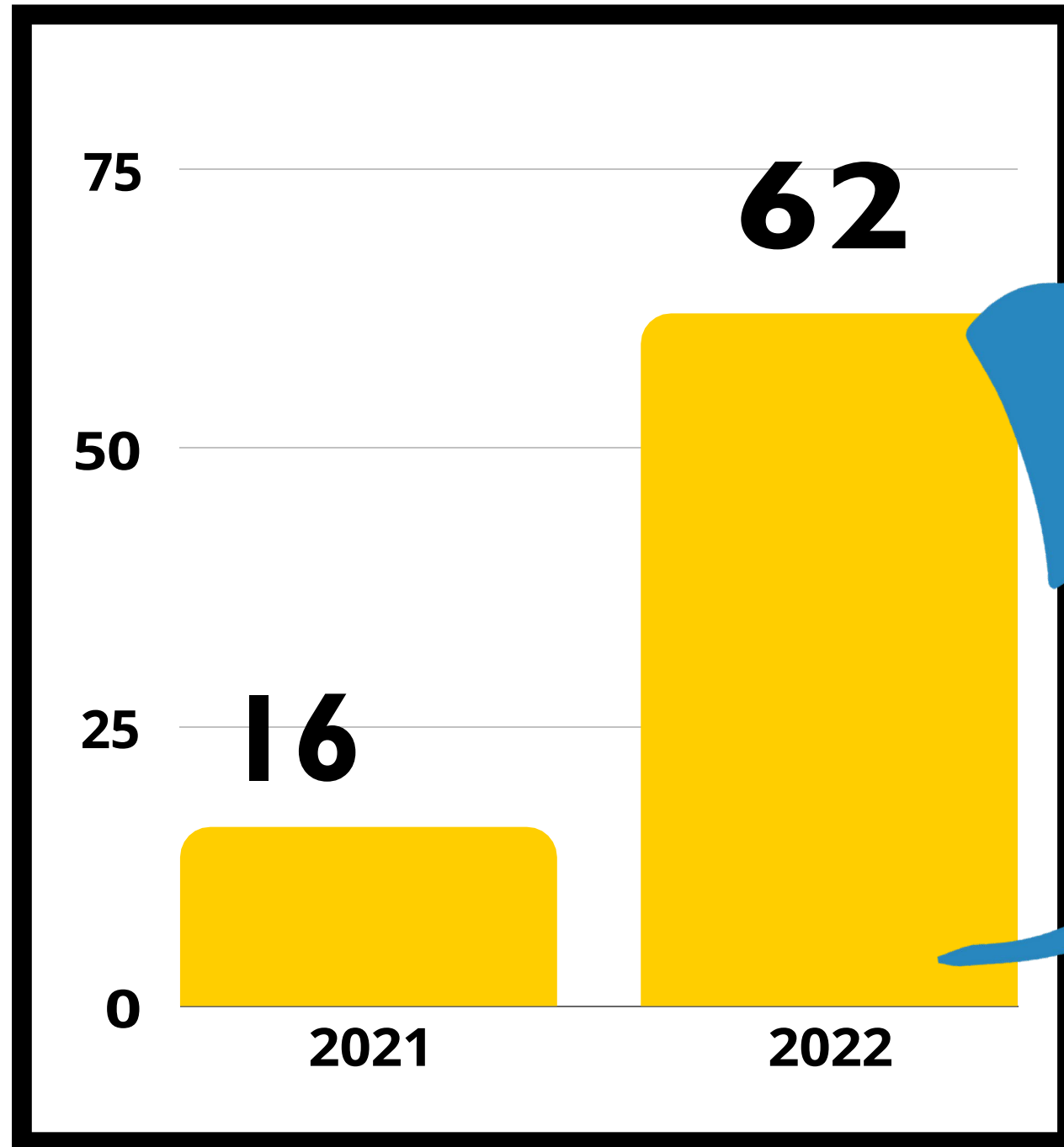
Research conducted by National Skills Coalition (NSC) explore the challenges essential workers face, particularly those employed by small businesses in California. It is our hope that this study assists in closing equity gaps by implementing policies that promote equitable workforce outcomes for the fifth largest economy in the world.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

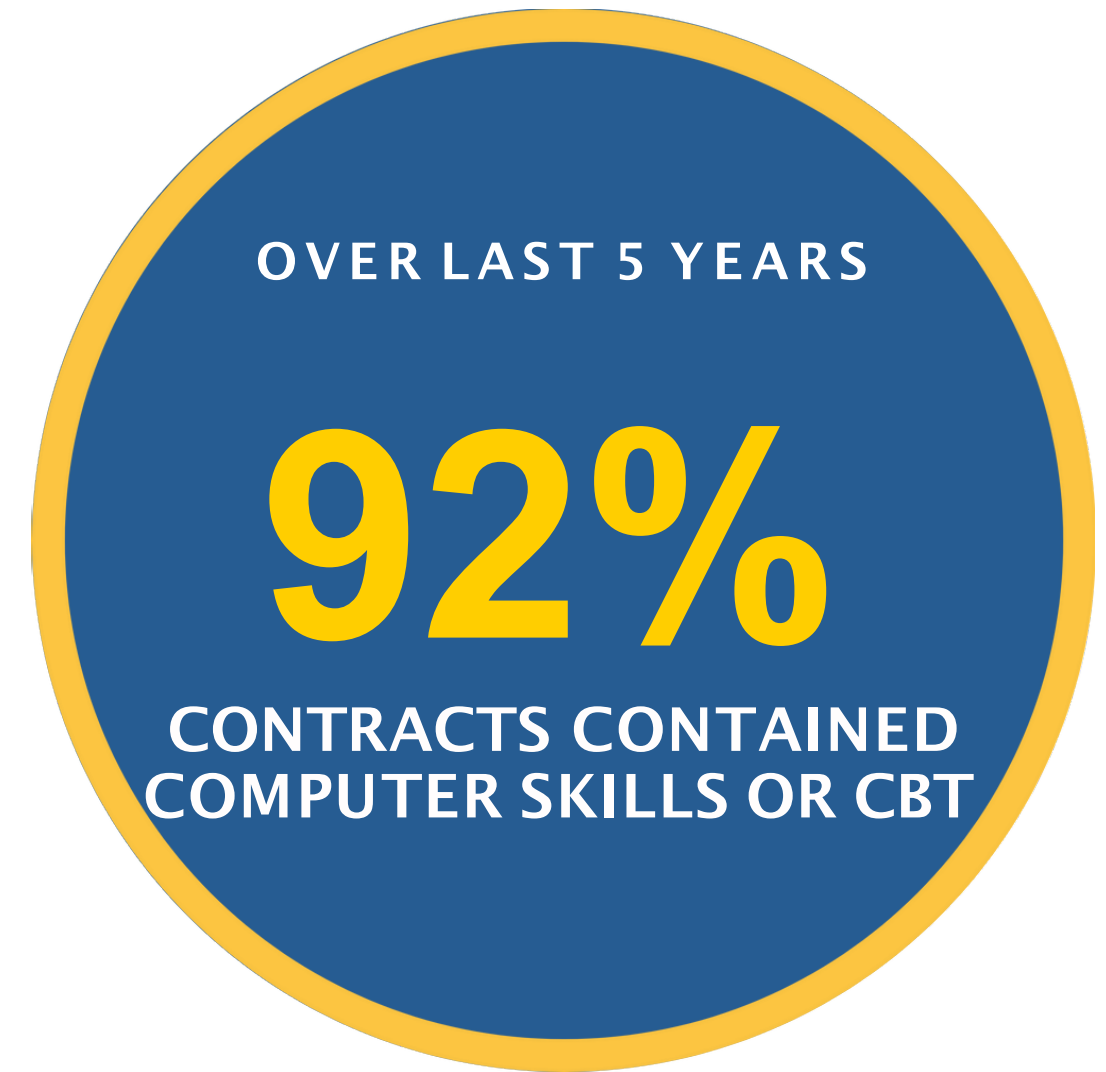
As technology evolves, populations in underserved communities are further left behind in terms of acquiring digital skills, accessing and obtaining affordable internet, and impacting upskilling opportunities. Digital skills include basic computer literacy such as operating smartphones and tablets necessary to perform their jobs, and more sophisticated industry specific digital skills.

The future of work requires both technical and cognitive skills to navigate and communicate in a variety of technological formats. The ETP strives to bridge the digital divide allowing equal opportunity and participation for California's workforce.

COMPUTER SKILLS TRAINING:



Contracts with Computer Skills Training



4x Increase

Small Business contracts with <100 Employees

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Encouraging employers to explicitly incorporate foundational digital skills as part of every training contract
- Gathering additional information from employers about opportunities for upskilling frontline workers into higher-level roles in fields like cybersecurity, helping to diversify talent pipelines
- Exploring possibilities of gathering baseline data on incumbent workers' digital skills via assessments conducted at the worksite

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Utilizing employer focus groups to gain qualitative labor market intelligence.
- Additional technical assistance navigating application and contract process.
- Strategic program outreach to increase participation of small businesses from disadvantaged and rural communities.
- Increase completion of training by essential workers, small businesses and underserved populations measured by contract performance rates.



DISCUSSION

Employment Training Panel