



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Employment Training Panel



Gavin Newsom GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 14, 2025

CONTACT: Robert Meyer,
Director of Economic Development
Robert.Meyer@etp.ca.gov

News Release

Employment Training Panel (ETP) awards funding to five Community-Based Organizations (CBO) to help refugees and immigrants start their own microbusinesses.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: ETP's Social Entrepreneurs for Economic Development (SEED) Initiative provides micro-grants, entrepreneurial training, and technical assistance to community-based organizations working with immigrants to help them start or maintain a small business aimed at addressing a social problem or meeting a community need. The goal of the SEED Initiative is to increase California's economic diversity and help spur business innovation. SEED target populations include Individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals who are neither U.S. citizens nor lawful permanent residents.

SACRAMENTO-- The California Employment Training Panel on Jan, 24 approved \$1 million to support the following community-based organizations with \$200,000 each:

- Afghan Coalition, serving Alameda, Sacramento, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, and San Francisco counties
- Chico Economic Planning Corporation, serving Alpine, Butte, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity, Yolo, and Yuba counties
- MCS, Economic Development Corporation, serving Los Angeles County
- Nurture, serving Central California and Monterey County
- United Domestic Workers Resource Center, serving Southern California and Inland Empire

"ETP is proud to make this investment in these CBOs serving immigrant communities. We know that creating an economy that works for all Californians involves a variety of economic levers, including entrepreneurship, which can lead to job creation and growth, so it is an honor to continue this signature program with this round of funding and to anticipate the same excellent results we have seen in past rounds." – Dr. Jessica Grimes, ETP Executive Director.

Since 2020, ETP, using funds from the State Legislature, provided \$30 million in the first two SEED funding rounds. The additional \$1 million awarded through SEED 2.5 in January was made available by the repurposing of remaining administrative funds to address the overwhelming interest and demand for this program.

These are two of many businesses that were created with funds from previous rounds of SEED:



Figure 1: Above photo provided by Jimenez Sisters Ranch

- **Jimenez Sisters Ranch** in Riverside is a socially responsible and ethical business that creates and shares authentic goat milk bath and body products. They use raw and naturally derived ingredients. Starting as a micro-farm raising Nigerian Dwarf Dairy Goats, the sisters developed a passion for promoting sustainable farming practices. They were supported by the Caravanserai Alliance for Entrepreneurs and SEED funding. [The Future Is Now Ep2: Madelyn, Olivia & Abigail Jimenez of Jimenez Sisters Ranch YouTube Video.](#)
- **Courage LLC** is a homeware worker cooperative in San Diego that was founded by a woman who was a respected Registered Nurse in the Philippines. Using funding from SEED and support from the Democracy at Work Institute, Courage was able to recruit more members and now is growing quickly.

SEED 2.5 funding recipients:



Figure 2 Above photo provided by the Afghan Coalition

Afghan Coalition: Since August 2021, approximately 100,000 Afghans have immigrated to the United States with California hosting the largest concentration nationwide. Through the SEED program Afghan Coalition aims to provide micro-grants, entrepreneurial training, and technical assistance to 40 Afghans throughout Northern California with a focus on education, childcare, technology, food service, construction, and clothing industries. Afghan Coalition has developed an in-person and virtual training program in English, Dari, and Pashto. Training topics include: business formation, marketing, financial management, legal requirements, and digital tools for business management.

"Supporting entrepreneurs in California through SEED 2.5 funding is a strategic investment in economic empowerment and community resilience. By providing

targeted training, coaching, and mentorship, along with the disbursement of microgrants to over 30 Afghan startups and organizations, we are fostering sustainable business growth. This cost-effective approach not only strengthens the local economy but also creates opportunities for Afghan immigrants to thrive, ensuring long-term stability and prosperity for the community." — Dr. Masoud Juya, Associate Director at Afghan Coalition.

Chico Economic Planning Corporation (ChicoSTART) in collaboration with their partner organization will provide microgrants, entrepreneurial training, and technical assistance to SEED target populations in Far Northern California. ChicoSTART aims to serve at least 60 adult Hispanic immigrants of all genders with a focus on agriculture, construction, healthcare, hospitality, information technology, manufacturing, retail and professional service industries. Due to the wide geographical area served, ChicoSTART will deliver half-day training programs in English and Spanish, repeating the trainings in four locations. To increase accessibility and extend reach, participants who cannot accommodate one of the four trainings will be offered one-on-one virtual trainings. Training topics will focus on business planning, building capital, and marketing strategies as well as assistance in overcoming specific rural economic barriers.



Figure 3 Above photo provided by Chico Economic Development Corporation

"At ChicoSTART, we believe entrepreneurship should be accessible to everyone, regardless of background or barriers. The SEED 2.5 funding allows us to empower underrepresented entrepreneurs throughout our North State region by providing the resources, training, microgrants and support they need to turn their ideas into thriving businesses. With our partner on this, California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, this grant strengthens economic resilience, fosters innovation, and creates opportunities that drive long-term success for our community." -- Eva Shepherd-Nicoll, Executive Director of ChicoSTART.



Figure 4 Above photo provided by MCS

MCS, Economic Development Corporation (MCS) in collaboration with their partner organization will serve immigrant and Limited English Proficient entrepreneurs in the Los Angeles area with a coordinated effort to serve those in high-risk construction jobs, specifically countertop fabrication. MCS' anticipated outcome is to assist 30 immigrant workers that are diagnosed with Silicosis or have been exposed to silica dust due to countertop cutting, change the trajectory of their lives with new entrepreneurship opportunities. MCS has developed two in-person training cohorts available in English and Spanish. Training topics include: marketing, legal considerations for businesses, financial management and accounting, access to capital, and business launch preparation.

"SEED 2.5 funding is essential for immigrant and Limited English Proficient (LEP) entrepreneurs, helping them transition from high-risk jobs, like countertop fabrication, to safer, sustainable businesses. With silicosis disproportionately affecting Latino workers in the San Fernando Valley and LA Harbor, this initiative addresses a pressing public health and economic crisis. By providing training, microgrants, and resources, SEED 2.5 empowers families, strengthens local economies, and promotes long-term financial independence." – Luis Luna, Director of Economic Development, MCS Economic Development.

Nurture in collaboration with their partner organization will provide micro-grants, entrepreneurial training, and technical assistance to SEED target populations throughout Central California, with a focus on outreach in Monterey County. Nurture aims to serve 60 Latina immigrants with an emphasis in the home-based child care industry. Nurture has created a 12-week Business Start-Up training program in Spanish and English comprised of two cohorts, Business Essentials and Accelerated Licensing. Each week participants will focus on a different training topic applying what they learned and how the information relates to their emerging business through Nurture's mobile app where entrepreneurs can watch short videos and explore digital resources. Training topics include: marketing, budgeting, recordkeeping, curriculum, child environment, parent communication, and start-up financial resources.



Figure 5 Above photo provided by Nurture

“At this moment when immigrants are under attack, SEED is an example of the concrete and constructive action we can take to ensure newcomers can achieve the California Dream. That dream is not only for individual financial security but also to meaningfully contribute to the economic vitality of our communities and, for childcare entrepreneurs, to provide an essential service that enables parents to work and thrive.”
 --Jennifer Brooks, Founder and CEO of Nurture.



Figure 6 Above photo provided by UDW Resource Center

UDW Resource Center (URC) provides resources and support to the United Domestic Workers/AFSCME Local 3930 which represents 1,200 Family Child Care Providers (FCCP). Through the SEED program URC aims to provide micro-grants, entrepreneurial training, and technical assistance to 30 FCCP's in San Diego County and recruit these participants to become mentors for URC's Family Child Care Educator Apprenticeship Program. URC has developed a hybrid (in-person and virtual) training program available in English, Spanish, Somali, and Arabic to accommodate accessibility and language needs. Training topics include: business management, ownership responsibilities, financial literacy, marketing, and business planning.

“The SEED 2.5 grant shines a well-deserved spotlight on Family Child Care Educators—small business owners and essential caregivers who are often the unsung heroes of our workforce. Their work is not only foundational in nurturing and educating children at a pivotal stage of development but also in supporting working families who rely on them every day. By providing high-quality care, they help keep communities strong

and economies thriving. This grant recognizes their dedication, ensuring they receive the resources and support they deserve.”— Nancy Hernandez, Apprenticeship Coordinator, UDW Resource Center.

For more information about the ETP program, please visit www.etp.ca.gov, or call (916) 737-4181.

###

The ETP was created in 1982 by the California State Legislature. It is governed by an eight-member panel whose members are appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the Assembly and the Senate and who represent business, labor and government.