



Office of the Small Business Advocate: California Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (CA RISE) Report 2023 - 2025

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CA RISE awards were administered by REDF, Lendistry and the California Office of the Small Business Advocate.

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California Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (CA RISE)

Background

The California Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (CA RISE) was created in 2021 (Government Code Section 11788) to accelerate economic mobility and inclusion for individuals that experience employment barriers. The program was funded with a \$25 million one-time appropriation via the Budget Act of 2022.

The purpose of CA RISE is to provide funding and technical assistance to employment social enterprises (ESEs) across California by connecting them with local public partners, training providers, and private sector employers to significantly expand opportunities for people who are typically not served through traditional workforce systems. It is also the nation's first statewide capital and capacity-building investment in ESEs.

An ESE is a for-profit or non-profit organization that reinvests all earned income towards jobs, training, or support services for individuals facing barriers to employment.

The CA RISE program officially launched in 2023, and grants were awarded in 2024.

Program Design

CA RISE was designed to align support for business development with workforce inclusion. The program provided grant capital paired with technical assistance to support the growth of employment social enterprises in California.

ESEs applied through a competitive grant process before being selected for CA RISE. Once selected, each entity received a one-time grant award ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000 to support investments related to the sustainable growth of their business or increased economic mobility among their participant employees. Grant award amounts were determined by the ESE's operating budget and applicants are evaluated using a scoring criterion including business model, program model, leadership and vision, and financial stability and capacity.

CalOSBA administered CA RISE in partnership with national advocate and leader in the employment social enterprise field, REDF¹, with fiscal management support from Lendistry. REDF supported grantees with a variety of services including but not limited to customized technical assistance, peer consulting from other local ESEs, and assistance enrolling in additional government programs (e.g., SNAP Employment Training).

Grant Recipients

CA RISE provided grants ranging from \$150,000 to \$500,000 to 61 recipients with a total of \$17 million awarded in 2024. Leadership and staff from each recipient in this first CA RISE cohort continued to participate in capacity-building leadership development delivered by REDF through fiscal year 2024-25.

CA RISE helped recipients secure new revenue and new public-sector contracts, all while expanding training and support services for Californians facing employment barriers such as reentry from incarceration, homelessness, addiction, and other challenges that have historically excluded many from work opportunities. Throughout fiscal year, 2024-25, 36 ESEs secured new public sector contracts or grants and 42 expanded their business in some way, either a new location or new product or service.

Of the 13,833 employed by CA RISE grant recipients (ESEs), 3,887 were newly hired throughout the course of the program by 30 participating ESEs. Based on voluntary, self-reported data, ESE employees are racially diverse with 32 percent identifying as Latinx and 31 percent identifying as Black. Self-reported data also indicates that 67 percent of employees identified as male and 31 percent identified as female. Seventy-four percent of managers for CA RISE ESEs also reported having firsthand experience facing barriers to employment.

¹ Now rebranded as Redefine Alliance.

The chart below shows the barriers faced by employees of the 61 ESEs in the program at the time of entry:

Lived Experience of Employees	# of Employees
Justice Involved	5,768
Housing Insecure	2,810
Mental Health Challenges	1,803
Substance Abuse Disorders	1,637
Opportunity Youth	1,172
Older Individuals	979
Single, pregnant or parenting	554
Individuals with Disabilities	510
Trafficking Survivors	306
Domestic Violence Survivors	270

Individuals may fit multiple categories.

Due to the demonstrated impact of CA RISE, Governor Newsom and the Legislature approved an additional \$17 million one-time appropriation in fiscal year 2024-25 to support a second cohort, CA RISE 2.0, which will launch in the second quarter of 2026.

List of CA RISE Recipients

Grantee	County of Headquarters	Total \$ Grant Amount	# of Jobs*
Center for Employment Opportunities	Alameda	\$500,000	910
Visión y Compromiso	Alameda	\$500,000	195

Antelope Valley Partners for Health	Los Angeles	\$500,000	120
Chrysalis	Los Angeles	\$500,000	2,095
Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Los Angeles	\$500,000	180
GRID Alternatives Greater Los Angeles	Los Angeles	\$500,000	70
The Beacon House Association of San Pedro	Los Angeles	\$500,000	39
Conservation Corps North Bay	Marin	\$500,000	165
Homeward Bound of Marin	Marin	\$500,000	43
Goodwill Central Coast	Monterey	\$500,000	994
Goodwill Industries of Orange County	Orange	\$500,000	1,362
Goodwill Industries of Sacramento Valley and Northern Nevada	Sacramento	\$500,000	1,922
Goodwill of San Francisco Bay	San Francisco	\$500,000	950
Homebridge	San Francisco	\$500,000	423
Juma Ventures	San Francisco	\$500,000	541
Urban Alchemy	San Francisco	\$500,000	1,155
San Jose Conservation Corps	Santa Clara	\$500,000	488
WeHOPE	Santa Clara	\$500,000	110
Berkeley Music Group - The UC Theatre	Alameda	\$400,000	224

PVJOBS	Los Angeles	\$400,000	22
Auticon US	Sacramento	\$400,000	74
AlliedUP Cooperative, Inc	San Bernardino	\$400,000	18
Planting Justice	Alameda	\$300,000	10
Homeboy Electronic Recycling	Los Angeles	\$300,000	52
Suay Sew Shop	Los Angeles	\$300,000	32
Rising Sun Center for Opportunity	Alameda	\$200,000	10
Downtown Streets Inc.	Santa Clara	\$200,000	196
1951 Coffee Company	Alameda	\$150,000	15
Urban University	Alameda	\$150,000	9
Fresno Area Community Enterprises	Fresno	\$150,000	21
Neighborhood Industries	Fresno	\$150,000	70
The Light House Recovery Program Inc.	Fresno	\$150,000	14
Vision View Business Formation Center	Fresno	\$150,000	6
Covenant Coffee	Kern	\$150,000	15
All About You Answering Services and More	Los Angeles	\$150,000	89
GrowGood, Inc	Los Angeles	\$150,000	20

Homegirl Catering	Los Angeles	\$150,000	12
L&F Project Management	Los Angeles	\$150,000	5
Los Angeles LGBT Center Culinary Arts Program / Liberation Coffee House	Los Angeles	\$150,000	56
New Earth Organization	Los Angeles	\$150,000	25
Piece by Piece	Los Angeles	\$150,000	26
Polishing The Professional	Los Angeles	\$150,000	36
Salazar Landscaping	Los Angeles	\$150,000	38
San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps	Los Angeles	\$150,000	170
South LA Cafe	Los Angeles	\$150,000	46
Street Company	Los Angeles	\$150,000	13
Restore Merced	Merced	\$150,000	36
Rancho Cielo	Monterey	\$150,000	63
Monkey Business Cafe	Orange	\$150,000	67
All Hours Adult Care	Riverside	\$150,000	16
MERISTEM INC.	Sacramento	\$150,000	24
Dreams For Change	San Diego	\$150,000	94
Kitchens for Good	San Diego	\$150,000	52

Rise Up Industries	San Diego	\$150,000	22
San Diego Youth Services	San Diego	\$150,000	26
UPAC Neighborhood Enterprise Center	San Diego	\$150,000	36
Farming Hope	San Francisco	\$150,000	70
Humanmade	San Francisco	\$150,000	13
Tenderloin Community Benefit District	San Francisco	\$150,000	20
Parents by Choice, Inc	San Joaquin	\$150,000	165
Homeless Garden Project	Santa Cruz	\$150,000	43
TOTAL	N/A	\$17M	13,833

*At conclusion of program