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The California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA) supports economic growth and innovation statewide. CalOSBA's core mission is to provide resources to All California small businesses, disabled veteran business enterprises (SB/DVBEs), minority and women-owned businesses, and those individuals who own and operate businesses located in low-wealth and rural communities.

CalOSBA supports outreach and engagement efforts in three ways, advocacy, resources, and building resilience in CalOSBA's programs with our Technical Assistance Network that supports growth and business sustainability statewide.

This month's newsletter highlights the CalOSBA efforts to serve California businesses statewide.

From The Advocate: California Entrepreneurship Still Leading the Way to California For All



California Office of the Small Business Advocate, Director, Tara Lynn Gray

The most meaningful and important action I take as Small Business Advocate is to listen to small business owners and mentally log their challenges. My favorite question to ask is: what's the hardest thing right now? Lately, I'm hearing one response a lot: I'm so tired.

Yes, this pandemic has lasted longer than anyone imagined. We are all very tired. This has been a strain on every part of the system. In 2021, CalOSBA expanded the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program (SBCRG) – making it the [largest direct relief grant program in the nation](#). Additionally, CalOSBA launched three new programs: for microbusinesses (Microbusiness COVID-19 Relief Grant Program), the live venues (California Venues Grant Programs), and startups (the Dream Fund). We are about to unveil the last grant program from the fiscal year 2021-22 budget: the California Nonprofit Performing Arts Grants Program.

But, like the small business owners we serve, there is no rest for the weary and no reward for sitting on your laurels.

2022 will not be a timeout for anybody...and the Governor has already provided a look-ahead at his budget priorities that anticipate what is needed for continued recovery. That recovery is still fragile, still in need of “boosters,” and I don’t want to diminish the anxiety of individual business owners, especially in the restaurant industry, during the omicron surge. But here are four reasons why I believe the pieces are falling into place to Rebuild, Restart, Reclaim, and Rejuvenate California For All.

Click on the [CalOSBA LinkedIn blog](#) link to read the full article.

Regional Advisors Corner

West Business Development Center Gets 14 New Entrepreneurs Off to a Strong Start



The West Business Development Center (West Center) recently hosted a kickoff event for [Startup Mendocino 2022!](#)

Startup Mendocino 2022! is a no-cost, business accelerator program that groups 13 early-stage businesses (14 business-owners) from Mendocino County in an intensive curriculum. The business accelerator covers important topics like business and financial planning, successful branding and marketing,

technology and best practices for e-commerce, time management, and successfully pitching your business.

Several of these early-stage businesses are taking advantage of the training to help them grow or adapt their business model to new revenue streams. "We have designed a curriculum that embeds opportunities to hear from local suppliers and county agencies. Making these professional connections in a rural community is essential for a business to be sustainable here", states Rachel Clark, the StartUp Mendocino 2022! instructor.



"How exciting to get to see the variety of new businesses and the strength of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Mendocino County," said CalOSBA's Northern California Regional Advisor Clair Whitmer.

CalOSBA's Northern California Regional Advisor Clair Whitmer (pictured right with Program Director Laura Brooks and CEO Mary Anne Petrillo) attended the kickoff to applaud the business owners on their commitment to the program.

West Center houses both a Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Centro Latino West, and a Women's Business Center (WBC) and is supported in part by funding from CalOSBA.

This Year's StartUp Mendocino 2022! Participants:

- Lorenzo Rota, [Volare Aerial Imaging](#)
- Jasmine Epperson, [Epperson Consulting LLC](#)
- Marshall Ahders, [Technix Consulting](#)
- Betty Torres, [Poetic Potions](#)
- Lori Enriquez, [Happy Rides LLC](#)
- Anthony Wells, [Mendocino Drone](#)
- Annabelle Carpenter, [Bella Bijou Jewelry](#)
- Mo Heinrich, [Mama Jama](#)
- Leslie Kashiwada and Daphne Washburn, [Mendocino Coast Creative Arts Café](#)
- Tara Bluecloud, [Bluecloud Botanicals](#)
- Lanakila Rodrigues, Killa Teas
- Adam Goldberg, Mendo Grass
- Jamie Umble, Hope Multiplied

Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship's (IECE) at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) School of Entrepreneurship Hosted a Historic Event



The Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship (IECE) held the first-ever “State of Entrepreneurship Address” on December 9, 2021, at the Cal State San Bernardino Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship.

One of the IECE’s goals is to bring the voice of the entrepreneur and the challenges today’s business owners face in this economic climate. To learn more about this historic event [click here to read the article](#).

Resiliency and Outreach

Director Gray Speaks with Your Central Valley Eyewitness News About the New State Budget Proposal



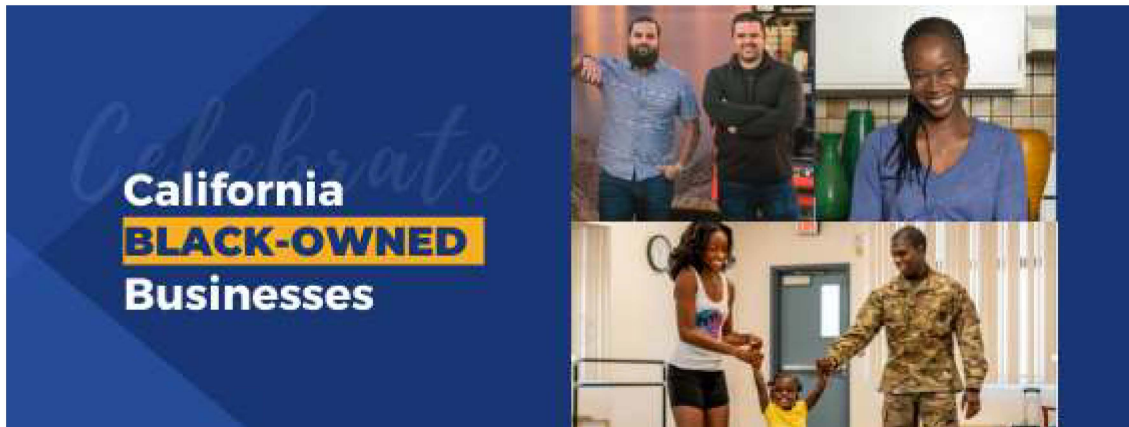
On January 17th, Tara Lynn Gray, CalOSBA Director, spoke to Megan Rupe with Your Central Valley Eyewitness News Today about California’s State budget proposal and support for small businesses.

“The governor has prioritized small businesses significantly,” said Gray after Rupe asked how the Governor’s recent budget proposal helps small businesses recover from the pandemic.

The budget proposal expands access to capital for historically underserved groups and small businesses impacted by COVID-19. Examples include the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program that would capture more small businesses still on the waitlist.

Director Gray also discussed other grant programs, like the Microbusiness COVID-19 Relief Grant Program, which will be released later this year. To watch the full interview, [click here](#).

Black History Month - Celebrating California Black-Owned Businesses



February 1st marked the beginning of Black History Month; at CalOSBA, it is a time to remember many of the African American business owners who have trail blazed throughout history.

Highlighted here are just a few spirited entrepreneurs such as:

- George Washington Carver (famous inventor and entrepreneur)
- Madam C.J. Walker (the first female African American millionaire)
- And Thomas L. Jennings (the first African American U.S. patent recipient)

The entrepreneurial spirit from our historic African American contributors continues to thrive throughout the Black community today.

That is why, CalOSBA wants to recognize and showcase some of the many African American small business owners who continue to overcome adversity and trail blaze their own path to success.

In the top-left image: [Amerivet Contracting](#) is a disabled veteran & Black-owned construction company specializing in construction site & emergency response services. Through tenacity and working with [San Diego and Imperial SBDC](#), Amerivet was awarded multiple government & public sector contracts over

\$1 million.

In the bottom image: A.C. Williams opened [Access to Motion Dance Company](#) near Vandenberg AFB in February 2020. Through hard work, and help from the [Mission Community Services Corp Women's Business Center](#). A.C. tripled her client rate and continues to provide a creative, safe space for dance, expression and community.

In the top-right image: Nafy Flatley, who is originally from Dakar opened [Teranga Life](#) to bring her Senegalese heritage to the Bay Area. In 2017, Nafy contacted the [Renaissance Women's Business Center](#) to get help setting up her business. Today, Nafy has secured contracts with the local government and plans to expand her business.

Happy Lunar New Year



The CalOSBA would like to wish our Asian American Community a Happy Lunar New Year. We wish you and your families happiness, fortune, and good health.

Gong hei fat choy!

CalOSBA supports economic growth and innovation and ensures that ALL California small businesses and innovative startups have the information and direct support they need to better navigate resources, programs, and regulations. CalOSBA serves as the voice of small business, representing their views and interests across the state and advocating for equitable access to capital, markets, and networks so that all California small businesses successfully start, manage, grow and become more resilient.

For more small business resources and information, visit calosba.ca.gov

No-cost and low-cost trainings are available through Technical Assistance Centers across the state. Browse the trainings on the CalOSBA website by [clicking here](#).

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