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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, rural and disaster-impacted communities.

CalOSBA supports outreach and engagement efforts through advocacy, sharing resources, and building resilience through programs and our Technical Assistance Network that supports growth and business sustainability.

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

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[From the Advocate](#)



FROM THE ADVOCATE



Unlock the Bond Box

California is investing a once-in-a-generation \$180 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years using state, federal and local funding. Building a new system of clean energy, repairing the state's roads, bridges and public transit and expanding high-speed internet to ultimately grow the state's economy have been the identified priority projects. Yet this historic investment offers the potential to achieve even greater impact on future generations.

"This goes far beyond roads and bridges – this is about investing in our communities and our families, giving opportunity to hard-working Californians and ensuring we deliver on our world-leading climate goals," Governor Newsom has said.

To track the \$180 billion spend, the Administration launched Build.ca.gov, a new state website showcasing the projects benefiting from the investment. Featuring an interactive state map showing the locations of projects underway or planned, the site also puts a spotlight on the people and businesses making it all happen. But what I want to draw attention to is the Project List section: the database of open projects that companies can bid on. I encourage you all to visit this new website for more information and open projects.

Yet to truly make the \$180 billion an endeavor of equity for all Californians, small businesses must be among those benefiting.

Read the full article on LinkedIn [here](#).

[Regional Small Business Success Stories](#)

Check out these small business success stories, made possible by the resourcefulness of these business-owners and the support of business advisors from California's [Small Business Center Network](#). We're featuring restaurants in this edition to celebrate California Restaurant Month in January.

Northern California

Farm to Bottle – The New Standard of Fresh Organic Almond Milk



Beber was born in 2012, when founder, Arielle Danan, took her yearlong experience from organic farming abroad and applied it to almonds in her hometown of Northern California.

Over the past ten years, Beber has grown from a humble start at the local Chico farmers market, to several regional farmers markets and stores in Northern California, to owning industrial equipment and employing 20 people in the Northstate.

Part of Beber's transformation and growth has been attributed to working with her local small business development center, in this case, ChicoSTART. Beber is one of many businesses that have been able to benefit from additional resources brought to the region by ChicoSTART's iHub2 designation.

Part of what makes Beber's almond milk unique is how they process their almond milk. They truly have made a new standard for organic almond milk by using local organic almonds and sprouting them, using purified water, a cold-press technique, a low-temperature pasteurization, topped off with no thickeners or preservatives.

All and all, this level of craft and product care, mixed with their delicious choice of flavors, makes Beber a shining star in the plant-based milk market. Check out their seasonal flavor, the Nog is out of control.

Visit Beber Almondmilk [online](#).

Central Valley

Serotonin Creative Consultancy - Standing out from the Crowd



Embarking on the entrepreneurial path is an exhilarating journey filled with boundless dreams and aspirations. However, beneath the surface of this excitement lie the formidable challenges that accompany the process of starting and growing a small business. From the initial spark of an idea to navigating the intricacies of business operations, finances, and market competition, small business owners find themselves in a dynamic landscape that demands resilience, strategic thinking, and an unwavering commitment to their vision.

Meet Casey Hogue, the creative force behind Serotonin Creative Consultancy in Modesto California, with 20 years of marketing magic under his belt, he's mastered the art of captivating audiences through his marketing prowess. Casey recently dipped his toe into the world of business ownership. Picture this seasoned marketer venturing into uncharted territory, armed with passion and a hunger for success.

Casey wasn't afraid to admit that being a business owner came with its own set of challenges, like many of us, he realized that running a business isn't just about creating compelling campaigns; it involves juggling the intricacies of day-to-day operations, crunching numbers for finances, and, of course, figuring out the whole capital game. Casey had a goal of growing his business operations, sales growth, and access to capital. With the assistance of the Valley Sierra SBDC, they developed a business plan to apply for funding, they also worked on customer development and sales tactics to increase his revenue and pursue a financial strategy.

Find out more about Casey's road to success, and the valuable guidance he received from the Valley Sierra SBDC [here](#).

Visit Serotonin Creative Consultancy [online](#).

Southern California

Serving up Style in the IE at The Factorie



Jamal Moreno envisioned The Factorie in San Bernardino to be more than an apparel store, but a place where the community can come together. He wanted to expand his business and sought out the help of the [OCIE SBDC network](#) to get business advice as well as search for grant and loan opportunities to help him create the gathering place he imagined.

Jamal was matched with business consultant Giovandi Lewis of the [Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship](#), a local SDBC within the OCIE network. In addition to providing consulting services, the network seeks to identify mutually beneficial partnerships with local cities, counties, and chambers. Jamal successfully obtained funding through the city of San Bernardino in the form of a \$25,000 grant.

The Factorie continues to serve the community and grow through both a brick-and-mortar store as well as an online presence. Whether you're looking to shop for a new style or want to sell and trade with other local suppliers, Jamal and his staff are ready to help. "From various colorways of Nike and Jordan shoes to limited edition tees, hoodies, pants, hats, specialty items, and more, we may just have what you're looking for. We strive to provide a wide selection for all by having vintage clothing and shoes to more recent designs," says Jamal.

Check out The Factorie in San Bernardino and on [Instagram!](#)

Visit The Factorie [online](#).

[Grant Programs](#)



The following grant programs are administered by CalOSBA. Review the status of upcoming and closed grant programs below.

Upcoming Programs

The following grant programs are currently planned.

- [California Small Agricultural Business Drought & Flood Relief Grant Program](#) Drought Group 3 is expected to open in May 2024 (Date TBD).

Closed Programs

The following grant programs are currently closed.

- [California Small Agricultural Business Drought & Flood Relief Grant Program](#) Groups 1 and 2 closed February 15, 2024.

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

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

[Submit a request to CalOSBA](#)



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