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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.

### **In This Issue:**

- [From the Advocate](#)
- [Regional Small Business Success Stories](#)
- [Grant Programs](#)

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**[From the Advocate](#)**



FROM THE ADVOCATE



## Art Work is Real Work

Last month, I had the honor of sitting on a panel at the California Economic Summit, speaking on stage with State Senator Anthony Portantino (25th District), Julie Baker, CEO of Californians for the Arts, Kristen Dolan, executive director of the California Desert Arts Council and Yaya Ortiz, co-founder of Culturamas Music and Arts.

This panel was the first time the Creative Economy had been talked about from the plenary stage at this annual event. How strange is that? It's strange because the creative economy contributes between 7.5 to 23 percent of the state's annual economic output, depending on what you include in that category.

And yet my fellow panelist Kristen Dolan still felt the need to remind the audience that "Art Work is Real Work". Thankfully, that was a great applause line so the audience recognized its truth. But, yes, it's strange to me that representatives of the arts in California need to come up with that kind of slogan. It's like the Arts is the Rodney Dangerfield of economic sectors: it just doesn't get the respect and attention it deserves until Hollywood writers go on strike and everybody panics that their Netflix feed is going to dry up.

I think this is because so many of the jobs generated by the Creative Economy are sole proprietors or micro-businesses, visible more in the aggregate than as individual players. To my office, that makes them even more important as bellwethers of economic and regulatory conditions, huge contributors to our cultural lives and, yes, a significant economic engine.

Do we really need to remind people of that in California? Apparently so.

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

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[Regional Small Business Success Stories](#)

In honor of Women's Entrepreneurship Day on November 19, 2023, check out these three women-owned small business success stories from the [California Office of the Small Business Advocate \(CalOSBA\) Small Business Development Center \(SBDC\) Network](#).

## Northern California

### Tomfoolery



Mary Hartley and Celeste Cramer bought the store Tomfoolery in 2023 which has been women-owned for 40yrs, since first opening its doors in 1983. They plan to bring in new lines and a fresh look to this long-term Chico business. “You can find all sorts of gifts and gadgets in the store that are playful, foolish, and silly! And we have other gifts that are a little more serious too.”

Mary & Celeste, Joint Business Owners of Tomfoolery, received small business guidance and trainings from the [Butte College SBDC](#) to assist them in purchasing this long-term business. Their coursework included, “Financial Management Series for Existing Businesses”, “QuickBooks Online Accounting” and “Marketing Funnels” which not only helped them understand the nuances of purchasing an existing business, but also how to monetize traffic and attract new customers as they expand their product lines. “These courses were helpful to gain knowledge and insight, as well as our small business Advisor who set the framework to help us launch the business.”

Check out the [Butte College SBDC](#) here.

Visit [Tomfoolery](#) online and visit the store at Tomfoolery Gifts & Gadgets 126 W. 3rd St. Chico, CA 95928

## Central Valley

## Whiz Kids: A Triumph of Innovation in San Luis Obispo



In the picturesque town of San Luis Obispo, California, a small but mighty business named Whiz Kids has become the talk of the town. Founded and led by Lesa Smith, this women-owned business has not only captured the hearts of locals but has also conquered the challenges that came with the digital age.

Whiz Kids started as a boutique store that offered unique and educational toys for children. Lesa, a passionate entrepreneur, envisioned creating a space where parents could find toys that not only entertained but also stimulated their children's minds.

However, with the onset of the pandemic and the shift towards the digital realm, Lesa realized the need to adapt to the changing landscape. The once-thriving local business faced a new challenge: establishing a strong online presence. Lesa understood that having a website was no longer a luxury but a necessity for sustaining and expanding the business.

Despite the challenges, Lesa approached the transition with determination and an innovative mindset. She invested time in learning about website development, sought advice from industry experts with her local Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Whiz Kids embarked on a digital transformation journey, ensuring that their online presence mirrored the warmth and uniqueness of their physical store.

The website launch marked a turning point for Whiz Kids. Customers, both local and from afar, now had the convenience of browsing and purchasing their favorite toys from the comfort of their homes.

Lesla's commitment to embracing change and her team's dedication to delivering exceptional customer experiences have paid off. Whiz Kids not only survived the challenges posed by the digital shift but thrived in the online marketplace.

Lesa Smith, Owner of Whiz Kids received small business guidance from the [Valley Community SBDC](#).

Check out the Whiz Kids success story [Success Stories | Valley Community SBDC](#).

Visit the Whiz Kids website [here](#).

## Southern California

### Turning Hardship into a Community Health Hub with Andrea's Healthy Kitchen



Tatiana Pacheco had been laid off and decided to take control of her financial future. She saw a need for healthier food options in her local community and decided to make a difference. Initially seeded with a loan from family, Tatiana turned her kitchen into a thriving healthy food delivery service.

When it was clear that it was time to expand, Tatiana connected with the [LA SBDC](#), and, with their help, evolved her business into [Andrea's Healthy Kitchen \(AHK\)](#) – the first pressed juice bar in the city of El Monte.

The SBDC advisors helped Tatiana with her business plan, permits, and with the process to purchase the property that is now the store you can visit today at 3513 Johnson Ave., El Monte CA 91731.

Exponentially profitable over the last few years, AHK has repaid all personal loans and is currently investing in upgrades to further enhance the experience of the customer.

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## [Grant Programs](#)



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

### Open Programs

The following grant programs *may open soon*. Stay on our email list to learn if/when these programs come available.

- [California Small Agricultural Business Drought & Flood Relief Grant Program](#) is still open
- [Accelerate CA Inclusive Innovation Hub](#), Round 3, San Bernardino/Inland Empire is open
- [State Small Business Credit Incentive \(SSBCI\)](#) is open
- [Ag Drought](#) Round 3 will open in January 2024

### Closed Programs

The following grant programs are currently closed.

- [California Dream Fund Grant Program](#)
- [California Venues Grant Program](#)
- [Microbusiness COVID-19 Relief Grant](#)
- [Supplemental Paid Sick Leave Relief Grant Program \(SPSL\)](#) - Round 1 closed on June 28, 2023.

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For more small business resources and information, visit [calosba.ca.gov](https://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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