



VISION TO REALITY

Impact Report 2022-2025

For: The California Governor's
Office of Business and
Economic Development
(GO-Biz)



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OUR NORTH STAR

NorthSTAR is a collaborative ecosystem which exists to achieve two strategic aims:

1. Build a model, scalable social enterprise ecosystem in Orange County.
2. Create illuminated pathways and zero barriers to entrepreneurship, especially social entrepreneurship, for underrepresented, underresourced communities.

NorthSTAR ORANGE COUNTY

(SYSTEMS TO ACCESS RESOURCES)

In 2022, RevHub embarked on a visionary journey: to create a robust social entrepreneurial ecosystem in Orange County, one that would simultaneously catalyze entrepreneurs to develop social and environmental solutions to our world's greatest challenges, and illuminate entrepreneurial pathways for underrepresented communities.

To achieve these aims, we brought together a strategic group of thought leaders and community organizations to create the NorthSTAR (Systems To Access Resources) collaborative. An \$8.5 million budget appropriation grant from the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), championed by Senator Josh Newman (CA-29th District), became the seed capital needed to achieve significant impact and build bright futures for social innovators, entrepreneurs, and the communities they serve and call home.

Since its founding, NorthSTAR has had over **2 million touchpoints** with individuals, engaged over **14,597** individuals in **business exploration**, **incubated 4,250 entrepreneurs**, been instrumental in the **creation of over 220 new businesses**, strengthened community infrastructure, and fostered economic mobility for individuals historically excluded from entrepreneurial opportunity. This report captures the outcomes of that work, outlining our shared vision for scaling this model to serve more communities across the county and state.

Moreover, NorthSTAR adopted a "no wrong door" approach, making sure entrepreneurs can access the right support no matter their stage or entry point. The team focused its outreach on underrepresented and underresourced communities, and the data shows it worked. Of those served, **68% were women, 65% were non-white, and 49% had annual household incomes under \$59,000.**

This report encapsulates the strides we have made in this transformative journey. It also underscores the importance of our entrepreneurial ecosystem in driving profound social impact.

SUCCESS STORY



KAREN CASWELCH
BridgED Manufacturing

NorthSTAR is about expanding the way people think and create, to do better not just for themselves, but for the greater community.

BridgED Manufacturing empowers youth and workers with hands-on robotics training, transforming automation into opportunity. With support from NorthSTAR, Karen has built educational partnerships and workforce programs that redefine how humans and robots collaborate. This bridges the gap between innovation, equity, and unfilled manufacturing jobs across Orange County and beyond.

THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACCESS GAP

Underresourced communities, often composed of underrepresented groups, are rich with potential, but face persistent barriers to economic mobility. Entrepreneurs in these communities are uniquely positioned to drive inclusive growth by creating businesses, generating jobs, and addressing social and environmental challenges. Despite comprising 40% of the US population, BIPOC individuals own only 19.7% of businesses. The gap is even greater when considering social entrepreneurs, or those building financially sustainable ventures aimed at creating positive impact. These entrepreneurs often emerge from communities closest to the problems, giving them deep insight into effective solutions, yet they lack equitable access to the tools required to succeed.

Barriers to entrepreneurship can be grouped into three categories of capital: intellectual, social, and financial.

INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL includes the knowledge, skills, and specialized resources needed to start, build, and grow a business. Underrepresented individuals often lack access to quality education, training, and representation in professional fields. Social entrepreneurs face additional complexity: their dual goals of impact and revenue require navigating niche regulatory environments and balancing diverse stakeholder interests. However, resources designed for such hybrid models are limited.

SOCIAL CAPITAL refers to networks and relationships that provide access to opportunities. Underrepresented entrepreneurs are often excluded from traditional networks that provide mentorship, exposure, and influence, which are all elements that can increase

entrepreneurial success. With fewer mentors or peers who share similar values and experiences, social entrepreneurs can find themselves isolated from critical support.

FINANCIAL CAPITAL remains the most significant barrier. From systemic bias in lending to disparities in venture capital distribution, access to funding remains out of reach for many; only between 3% and 4% of all angel and seed funding goes to Black or Latino founders.

Solving these challenges requires building inclusive ecosystems that provide the right mix of knowledge, relationships, and capital to help entrepreneurs thrive.

SUCCESS STORY



VERONIQUE RAE
Urban V's Coffee

"A microgrant and a six-week course gave me the tools and business skills I needed to launch. I started with three bags of coffee and a percolator, and now I have a thriving business."

After losing her job during COVID, Veronique turned to her lifelong love of coffee and launched Urban V's Coffee. With support from NorthSTAR, she gained the tools and confidence to grow a thriving business. Now, she's building a community, one cup, one connection, and one dream at a time.

THE CONTEXT

ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Orange County is often perceived as a place of affluence and opportunity, but this reputation obscures the lived reality for many residents, particularly in North Orange County.

Research shows that many communities have endured decades of underinvestment, systemic barriers, and limited access to economic opportunity. These neighborhoods are home to diverse, resourceful individuals with strong entrepreneurial drive, yet remain disconnected from the infrastructure, capital, and networks that enable business ownership elsewhere in the county.

NorthSTAR was created to change that. By investing in local entrepreneurs and removing the structural barriers they face, NorthSTAR activates small business development as a tool for inclusive economic growth. When underrepresented founders succeed, they do far more than improve their own livelihoods; they create jobs, build community wealth, and strengthen local economies from within. In these contexts, entrepreneurship transforms into a catalyst for broader revitalization and long-term prosperity across the region.

SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX (SPI)

	Tier 1: Very High SPI	58% White	HH Inc: \$139,890
	Tier 2: High SPI	49% White	HH Inc: \$104,260
	Tier 3: Low SPI	45% Hispanic	HH Inc: \$80,213
	Tier 4: Very Low SPI	76% Hispanic	HH Inc: \$68,837

VERY HIGH SPI

8 out of 10 residents are engaged in the labor market with at least a bachelor's degree

52% chance of securing a loan as a small business owner

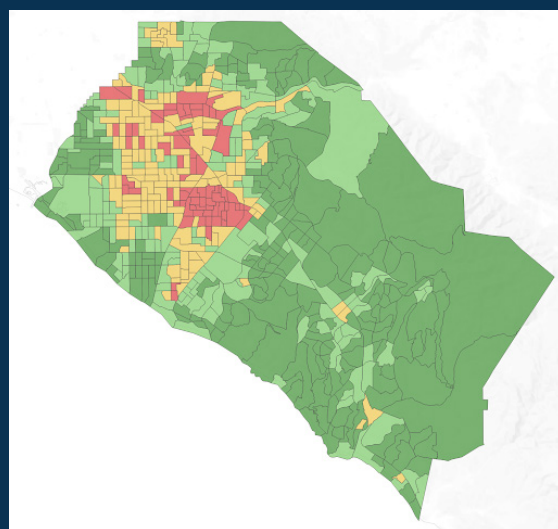
49% average net new business growth per annum in neighborhood

VERY LOW SPI

3 out of 10 residents are engaged in the labor market with at least a bachelor's degree

42% chance of securing a loan as a small business owner

46% average net new business growth per annum in neighborhood



Analysis of 580 census tracts using data from the [Social Progress Index](#), CDC health indicators, and demographic sources

A black and white photograph of three people in a workshop or factory setting. A woman on the left is looking towards a man in the center, who is looking down at a laptop. Another man on the right is also looking at the laptop. They are all wearing overalls or work clothes.

IMPACT THESIS

Creating meaningful impact by unlocking access to intellectual, social, and financial capital for entrepreneurs, enabling them to create new businesses and jobs that increase social mobility for themselves and others, which drives economic growth and improves outcomes in their communities.

	Short-Term Outcomes	Medium- and Long-Term Outcomes
Entrepreneurs	• Increased access to support and resources • Increased knowledge of entrepreneurship principles, processes, and resources • Increased confidence in launching and sustaining a successful social enterprise • Expanded professional networks and mentorship opportunities	• Increased capital raised for social enterprises • Increased income • Increased wealth and socioeconomic mobility
Ecosystem Partners	• Increased understanding of the needs of social entrepreneurs • Increased understanding among partners of each other's competencies and value to the ecosystem	• Greater collaborative effectiveness in supporting social entrepreneurs and underrepresented communities
Local Community	• Increased community cohesion • Increased private investment in businesses located in or serving the community	• Increase in the number of new social enterprises • Increase in the number of underrepresented business owners • Increase in new jobs created/economic development • Increased local and state tax revenue • Improvement of socioeconomic, health, and environmental outcomes addressed by new social enterprises

OUR MODEL

NorthSTAR believes in the transformative power of entrepreneurship to unlock human potential. Through our program, we provide aspiring individuals with the essential pillars of Belief, Access, and Knowledge, enabling them to achieve upward social and economic advancement.



BELIEF | AMPLIFY SUCCESS STORIES.

We create the belief that anyone can create a business which drives positive change, creates jobs, builds wealth, and ultimately shapes communities for the better.



ACCESS | ELIMINATE BARRIERS.

We eliminate barriers by providing equal access to resources, networks, and opportunities. NorthSTAR ensures that aspiring entrepreneurs from all backgrounds, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds have equal opportunity to launch and scale their businesses.



KNOWLEDGE | ILLUMINATE PATHWAYS.

We equip individuals with comprehensive entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. Through tailored training programs and practical workshops, we provide the necessary tools, business acumen, and insights to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

“Through NorthSTAR, the CSUF Startup Incubator expanded our incubator program to include a social entrepreneurship track, creating a highly scalable asynchronous Social Enterprise Course titled ‘From Idea to Impact’ that has been made available region-wide at no cost to participants.”



PHILIP STINIS
Incubator Manager |
California State University, Fullerton
Center for Entrepreneurship

A COMPREHENSIVE BLUEPRINT FOR INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP, JOB CREATION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE IMPACT



Comprehensive Program Launch:

Deployed \$8.5 million from the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz).



Established as a Leading Authority:

Positioned NorthSTAR as a key resource in the entrepreneurial landscape, which has enhanced our visibility and credibility.



Expanding the Ecosystem:

Connected and coordinated over 115 entrepreneurial support organizations to drive exponential collective impact.



Strategic Outreach and Storytelling:

Amplified reach and engagement to successfully inspire over 2 million entrepreneurs to embark on their entrepreneurial journeys and build community trust.

THE PILOT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1

Developed Strategic Framework

2

Assembled Management Team and Collaborative Partners

3

Built Strategic Relationships

4

Established Metrics and Evaluation Process

5

Increased Awareness Through Outreach

6

Developed and Implemented Tailored Programs

7

Secured Additional Funding

8

Created the Social Enterprise Ecosystem

1

DEVELOPED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Ensuring long-term sustainable impact and expansion to other communities required a robust Theory of Change and a detailed Logic Model for the NorthSTAR initiative. This strategic framework served as our roadmap, guiding every step of our mission and ensuring our efforts align with our core objectives.

At the heart of our approach are two key strategic aims:

1. **Build a model, scalable social enterprise ecosystem in North Orange County.**
2. **Create illuminated pathways and zero barriers to entrepreneurship, especially social entrepreneurship, for underrepresented, underresourced communities.**

With these outcomes established, we developed a comprehensive measurement framework for outreach, multi-stage programming, research and evaluation, fundraising, and communication.

ASSEMBLED MANAGEMENT TEAM AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

2

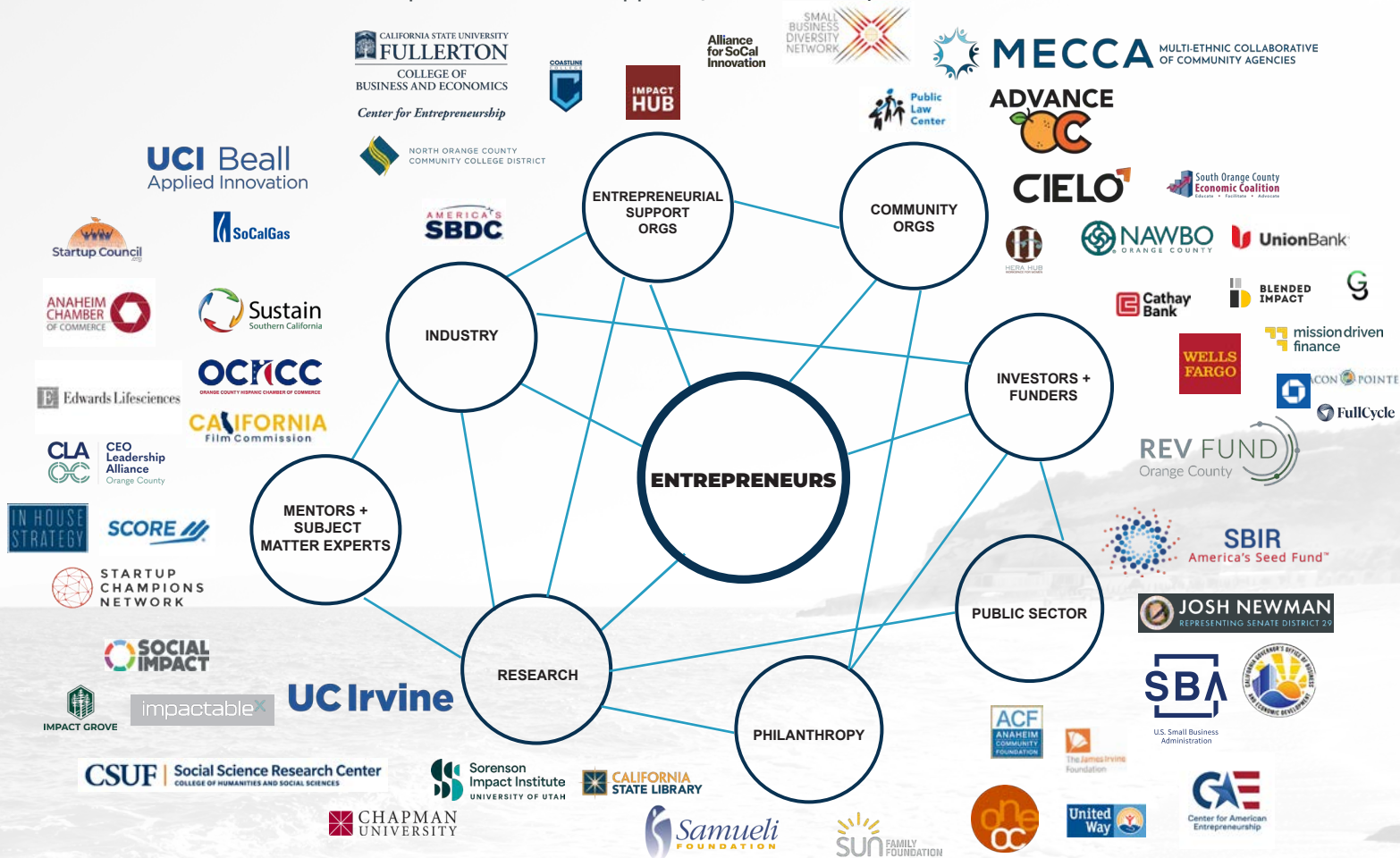
NorthSTAR's model required a team and network designed for coordination, trust-building, and place-based delivery.

- **Centralized Management Team:** Oversaw operations, strategy, communications, development, and performance tracking.
- **Ecosystem Support Roles:** Community and advisor navigators ensured trusted, personalized connections to resources.
- **Program Execution Roles:** Ideation and incubation navigators supported founders at each stage of the journey.
- **Founding Collaborative Partners:** 9 original partners (in addition to RevHub) with deep connections to the community co-designed the initiative, led community outreach, and implemented entrepreneurial support programming.
- **Strategic Partners:** 12 additional partners joined to expand reach and deepen community alignment.
- **Ecosystem Network:** 115 support organizations engaged through mapping, referrals, and joint programming.



ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT IS AT THE HEART OF OUR STRATEGY.

By creating a supportive and interconnected network of partners, mentors, investors, and resources, we are able to provide a holistic support system for entrepreneurs.



FOUNDING PARTNERS



Social enterprise programming, mobilization of resources for ecosystem building, and lead convener of NorthSTAR.



Outreach, engagement, and exploration for the Black community and monolingual, limited-English-proficient AAPI residents in Orange County.



Outreach, engagement, incubation, and business formation programming for underresourced communities.



Outreach, engagement, exploration, and social enterprise ideation and incubation programming.



Add, update, and manage data on social entrepreneurship, small businesses, and capital access in the OC Equity Map.



Outreach and engagement among multi-ethnic communities in north and central Orange County.



Exploration, ideation, and incubation programming.



Outreach, advocacy, and connection with the Orange County business community.



Fiscal sponsorship and financial oversight of the NorthSTAR initiative.



Impact research and analysis of NorthSTAR programming and activities.

BUILT STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

3

To sustain and scale our efforts, we brought together public, private, and philanthropic entities, creating a robust support network for our initiatives.

Key Strategic Relationships:

- Secured additional funding through private foundations and philanthropists.
- Leveraged relationships with donor-advised fund managers for long-term support.
- Expanded our resource ecosystem through partnerships with 115 community organizations.
- Partnered with Sustain SoCal based on their 30+ years of experience in the sustainability space and 4,000+ private sector members.

4

ESTABLISHED METRICS AND EVALUATION PROCESS

With short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes established, along with data definitions, the NorthSTAR collaborative developed a comprehensive measurement plan/tools to assess the implementation and quality of outreach, multi-stage programming, ecosystem building, and collaborative engagement activities

Data metrics allowed us to track who was served, what resources/services were developed/deployed, what information was shared, how many businesses were created, and which activities were implemented to form a social enterprise ecosystem. These metrics were crucial to understanding the successes and challenges of NorthSTAR's efforts.

We did this by collecting data on a monthly basis from all program partners, reviewing findings and trends, and discussing how to best address gaps in the future.

5

INCREASED AWARENESS THROUGH OUTREACH

Over 2 million touchpoints with the community achieved NorthSTAR's objective of knowledge sharing and awareness of entrepreneurship among the general public via speaking engagements, ads, newsletters, podcasts, etc. Key examples include:

- Orange County Business Council (OCBC) Award for public-private partnership that sparked economic development and entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (OCHCC) – Estrella Award for Excellence in Community Building Through Partnership.
- Media Coverage, including 27 placements, 91 million impressions, and features in 13 media outlets.
- Sponsored 2024 Southern California Entrepreneurship Week and SoCal Celebrates Entrepreneurship (SCCE) 2024 & 2025.
- Keynote Speaker at National Association of Women Business Owners – California (NAWBO-CA) Propel 2024 Conference.
- Held the inaugural Women in Impact Investing Event.

DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED TAILORED PROGRAMS

6

Data-informed, targeted programs ensured comprehensive assistance at every stage, fostering collaboration and providing the means necessary to successful business launches. Key strategic wins include:

- Establishment of the North Orange County Community College District (NOCCCD) Center for Entrepreneurship.
- 3 business **ideation** programs and 3 social enterprise **incubators**.
- 673+ workshops, bootcamps, and networking events.
- Creation of Orange County's first Climate Action Business Incubator in collaboration with UC Irvine and Sustain SoCal.
- Online platforms for entrepreneurship resources and community engagement.
- CSUF Center for Entrepreneurship shifted curriculum and incubation programs to focus on social enterprise as the primary business model for its student entrepreneurs.

7

SECURED ADDITIONAL FUNDING

NorthSTAR leveraged the \$8.5 million government appropriation to strategically engage with public and private entities, securing additional funding and sponsorships to bolster our entrepreneurial ecosystem, thereby enabling NorthSTAR's long-term sustainability. Moreover, by showcasing the impact of GO-Biz's support, we were able to attract further investments from both state and federal agencies.

This "additive funding" builds on itself to produce financial longevity while also expanding our partnerships with private foundations, corporations, and philanthropic organizations committed to amplifying the mission.

- \$400,000 - Foundation Grants
- \$250,000 - SBA Awards
- \$799,500 funding for entrepreneurs
- \$50,000 - Wells Fargo Microgrant

BUILDING THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ECOSYSTEM

8

Social entrepreneurs are developing scalable solutions to our world's greatest social and environmental challenges. We've seen remarkable progress in uniting public, private, and philanthropic partners to support entrepreneurs throughout their journeys.

- **3,898 people served through social enterprise ideation activities.**
- **2,518 people served through social enterprise incubation activities.**
- **Flagship programs include the Climate Action Business Incubator (CABI), Ignite Impact ideation program, and "From Idea to Impact" digital course.**
- **Key ecosystem partners: UCI Beall Applied Innovation, GO-Biz, Sustain SoCal (with a 4,000-member network), and major philanthropies/foundations.**

NORTHSTAR RESULTS



Our metrics tell a powerful story of success and potential. But beyond the numbers, NorthSTAR represents hope, opportunity, and the promise of a better tomorrow. Our efforts have not only fostered innovation, job creation, and growth, but have also ensured these opportunities are accessible to those traditionally underrepresented in the entrepreneurial space. Our community of entrepreneurs is **68% WOMEN** and **65% NON-WHITE**, and **49% have a HOUSEHOLD INCOME less than \$59,000/year**, showcasing the diversity and equity of opportunity.

2,067,422

TOUCHPOINTS WITH INDIVIDUALS

14,597

INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN BUSINESS EXPLORATION

5,464

INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN BUSINESS IDEATION

4,250

INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN BUSINESS INCUBATION

4,636

INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN SOCIAL CAPITAL PROGRAMMING

223

NEW BUSINESSES FORMED DIRECTLY FROM NORTHSTAR PROGRAMMING

SUCCESS STORY

The County Project is a community-driven apparel brand that celebrates Orange County's culture, connecting creatives, neighborhoods, and local businesses through fashion, events, and authentic collaboration.

"They plugged me into their network, connected me with mentors, and even helped me with a grant proposal. It forced me to create a solid business plan and realistic goals."

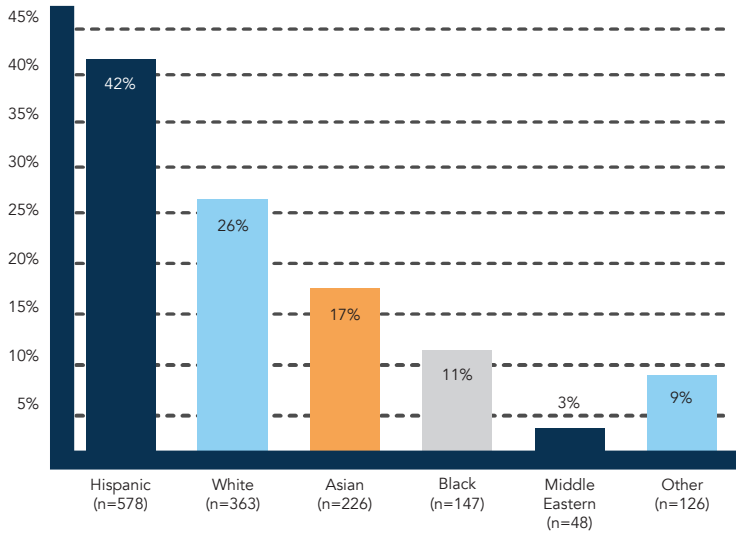
KEVIN HOBBY
The County Project



NORTHSTAR RESULTS

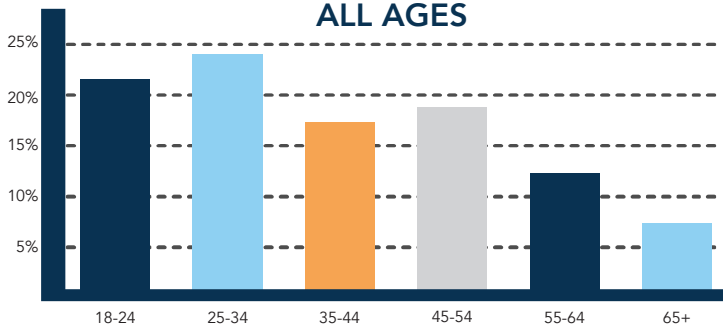
Quantitative Data

ETHNICITY*

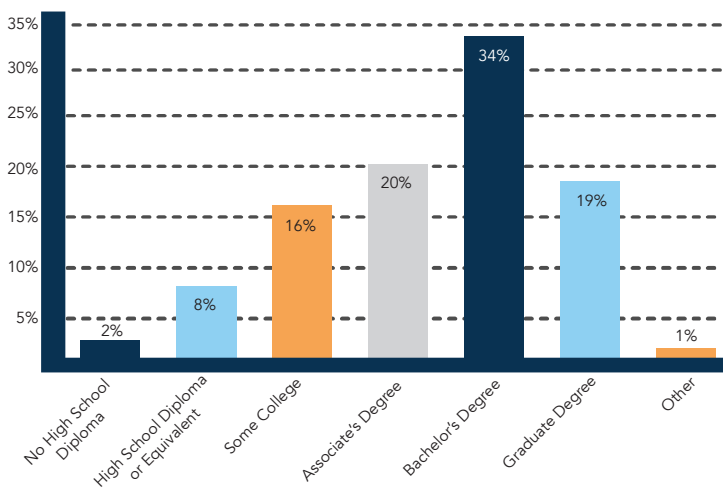


*Participants can select more than one ethnicity; therefore, totals add up to more than 100%

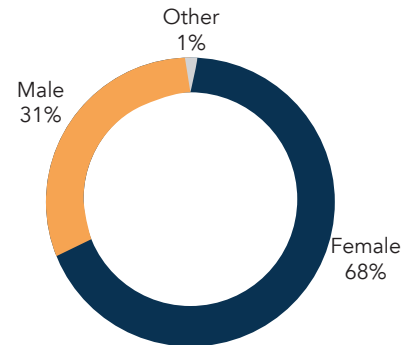
ALL AGES



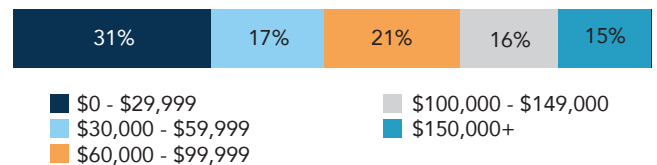
ALL EDUCATION LEVELS



GENDER



CURRENT HOUSEHOLD INCOME



RESPONDENT POPULATIONS

Education Level n = 323	Ethnicity n = 1,338	Gender n = 1,161
Age n = 493	Household Income n = 326	

SUCCESS STORY

"The program's **practical approach** and **insightful sessions** proved invaluable in refining my business and impact model."



RENA BRAR PRAYAGA
StoryKasa

StoryKasa's audio adventures connect families and communities through the power of storytelling. Users from diverse backgrounds record their unique stories, promoting literacy and language development.

NORTHSTAR RESULTS

Quantitative Data

COMMUNITY VOICE FINDINGS

Focus groups were conducted by the **Multi-Ethnic Collaborative of Community Agencies (MECCA)** under the direction of **RevHub** as part of the NorthSTAR initiative. Participants included **431 aspiring entrepreneurs from multilingual and multiethnic communities in Orange County**, with a focus on first-generation immigrants, elders, and working parents.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- **Language and cultural barriers** limited access to licensing, marketing, and training resources.
- **Financial constraints** (startup costs, inflation, limited credit history) were a major hurdle.
- **Administrative burdens**, especially for home-based businesses, created confusion and delays.
- **Digital literacy gaps** hindered online growth and marketing efforts.
- **Women entrepreneurs** faced added pressure due to caregiving and lack of transportation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY

- **Multilingual business hubs** staffed by in-language navigators
- **Mentorship for the first 100 days** with culturally matched business leaders
- **Microgrants (\$5K–\$10K)** for people of color to cover real startup needs
- **Licensing guidance** and simplified multilingual processes
- **Digital skills workshops** in native languages (e.g., Canva, mobile payments)
- **Wraparound supports**, such as on-site childcare and local transit partnerships

KEY INSIGHTS FROM COMMUNITY VOICES

- “I now know I’m not alone because this group helped me see that my business idea is possible.”
- *Cambodian-American Participant*
- “I gained a better understanding of how business works in the US.”
- *Vietnamese-American Participant*
- “Now I know I am qualified to start a business, and there is support available to help me.”
- *Latina Participant*
- “Before this, I had no idea how to get started or who to ask. Now I have a direction.”
- *Korean-American Participant*
- “I want to open a family business so my children can have more than I did.”
- *Middle Eastern Participant*
- “I saw someone like me running a business and realized I could do it, too.”
- *Indigenous Participant*
- “My culture is not a barrier. It’s my advantage. I want my business to reflect that.”
- *Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Participant*
- “This is the first time someone asked me what I want to build. That means something.”
- *Black Entrepreneur Focus Group*

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

“The powerful framework of the NorthSTAR project is measured via the impact and opportunity of social enterprise on the real lives of people and families across a broad economic ecosystem within the innovative culture of Orange County.”



DR. CATHLEEN GREINER
Director |
Center for Entrepreneurship,
North Orange County
Community College District
(ret. 2025)

LOOKING AHEAD: WHAT'S NEXT?

KEY LEARNINGS

1. **"No Wrong Door" Works.** Multiple, illuminated access points and a decentralized, coordinated, partner-driven model allowed entrepreneurs at any stage and from any background to easily navigate support, referrals, and resources.
2. **Access To Capital Must Be Coupled With Trust.** Early-stage funding helped, but real impact required trust. Entrepreneurs pursued funding more readily when guided by culturally competent advisors and navigators from their own communities.
3. **Entrepreneurial Confidence Is Contagious.** Even those who didn't launch ventures became champions for entrepreneurship. Confidence, especially among BIPOC and underresourced populations, grew through exposure and consistent support.
4. **Place-Based Ecosystems Elevate Proximate Leadership.** Founders closest to community challenges were best positioned to design solutions. By working in underserved areas, NorthSTAR surfaced ideas from entrepreneurs that traditional pipelines often miss.
5. **Cross-Sector Collaboration Is Key.** Institutions, nonprofits, and entrepreneurs co-created programs like the Climate Action Business Incubator and bootcamps for justice-involved individuals, tailored to community needs and regional strengths.
6. **Data Infrastructure Must Be Built For Impact:** A shared data and evaluation system revealed engagement and outcomes. Deeper metrics are needed to link short-term results with long-term mobility and economic growth.

– CRITICAL VULNERABILITY –

NO EVERGREEN FUNDING MECHANISM FOR INCLUSIVE PLACE-BASED ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The NorthSTAR pilot has proven the model works, but sustaining and scaling it across the state requires funding mechanisms that go beyond time-limited grants. Currently, no evergreen sources of funding exist at the federal, state, or local level, causing ecosystem builders to divert significant energy toward chasing funding, rather than delivering impact. The current cycle of "random acts of ecosystem building" limits scalability, discourages risk-taking, and delays innovation. If we want durable equity, we must look to models like the *Canadian Social Innovation/Social Finance initiative* and **fund the infrastructure that makes it possible.**



NorthSTAR began as a pilot to test whether building a place-based social enterprise ecosystem could unlock the potential of underrepresented founders.

The data is clear: it can, and it did.

Thousands engaged, hundreds of businesses launched, and a coalition of partners aligned around a common vision. We're proud of what we've built.

This work has taught us more than metrics can show. We've seen firsthand how proximity, trust, and infrastructure can create outsized outcomes when designed with intention.

Orange County still has work to do, but what we've developed here is a proven model, and we are now trusted leaders in building ecosystems that deliver strategic, inclusive growth.

Our next chapter is about scale. With NorthSTAR as our guide, and the funding necessary to catalyze real transformation, we're ready to expand and sustain this work in Orange County, and help other regions illuminate their own pathways to entrepreneurship, **backed by our Playbook, a mission, and a movement.**



STEPHAN ERKELENS
Founder & CEO | RevHub

OUR ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM PLAYBOOK

Scaling our impact, inspiring more entrepreneurs, and driving lasting social and economic change.

What we started in Orange County demonstrated what had long been missing from efforts to build a comprehensive and inclusive model for economic growth, job creation, and community empowerment.

NorthSTAR has done more than merely succeed in Orange County. **It has created an exportable framework.** As California works to strengthen its entrepreneurship infrastructure through the *California Jobs First Blueprint*, a gap analysis reveals key opportunities that NorthSTAR directly addresses:

STRATEGIC SECTOR	IDENTIFIED GAP	NORTHSTAR RESPONSE	RELEVANT INVESTMENTS & ACTIVITIES
Entrepreneurship & Innovation	Fragmented support services for underserved founders	"No wrong door" regional model with warm referrals	300+ workshops and events, navigator roles, outreach to 2M+ people, our online platform with 150+ organizations/services
Entrepreneurship & Innovation	Few initiatives focused specifically on social enterprise	Social enterprise is the NorthSTAR mandate, not an add-on	3 incubators, 3 ideation programs, "From Idea to Impact" course, targeting 1,000+ aspiring entrepreneurs
Entrepreneurship & Innovation	Weak links between entrepreneurship and equity agendas	Designed for and by underrepresented communities	68% women, 65% non-white participants; focus on veterans, justice-involved, low-income women
Capital Access & Financial Infrastructure	Lack of tailored capital for early-stage ventures	Deploys microgrants and connects to pre-seed impact investors	Blended capital (dilutive and non-dilutive) for early-stage ventures; ongoing technical assistance and capital navigation
Clean Energy & Climate Innovation	Gaps in innovation-driven clean energy entrepreneurship	CABI incubator plus ARCHES alignment; RevHub leads inclusive innovation	Co-founded CABI with UC Irvine and Sustain SoCal; 25+ clean energy ventures incubated; Jobs First proposal aligned with ARCHES hydrogen hub

What happens in California often shapes the future of the nation. With the *California Jobs First Blueprint*, we have a real opportunity to align sectors, regions, and capital around inclusive growth. But we can't afford more random acts of ecosystem building. Real impact comes from coordinated infrastructure and shared agendas that turn scattered efforts into lasting change. The NorthSTAR pilot proved that when we invest in entrepreneurs closest to the problem, we unlock solutions built to scale.

Building that future is not the job of one institution. It requires universities, community colleges, industry, philanthropy, the public sector, impact investors, and community-based organizations working from the same blueprint. We need more than lace-pullers. We need builders, connectors, and long-view thinkers at every level. If we align our efforts now, we will not just create more jobs. We will build ecosystems that uplift entire regions and create generational prosperity in communities that have too often been left behind.

SCALING INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACROSS CALIFORNIA

We urge GO-Biz to invest in scaling NorthSTAR's proven social enterprise and inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystem model across Orange County and other high-need regions in California.

NorthSTAR has demonstrated that a coordinated, place-based approach to entrepreneurship can unlock economic potential in underresourced communities. This pilot achieved high engagement, validated strong market demand, and built the foundation for sustainable ecosystem growth.

To maintain this momentum and meet the demonstrated need, we request GO-Biz's support to:

- **Expand successful pilot activities** across additional counties.
- **Sustain and deepen current programs** that support entrepreneurs addressing society's most pressing social and environmental problems.
- **Invest in a centralized ecosystem backbone**, including shared data infrastructure and access to capital pathways.

This is a direct pathway to achieving state economic goals: **job creation, inclusive entrepreneurship, regional resilience, and equitable industry growth**. NorthSTAR aligns with GO-Biz's core priorities of supporting innovative, cross-sector efforts that drive economic mobility in underserved communities.

What's needed now is bold state leadership to back this scalable solution. By funding and endorsing regional social enterprise ecosystems like NorthSTAR, California can lead the nation in transforming entrepreneurship into a true engine for equity and innovation.

We are ready and able to continue this important work in partnership with the State of California, and look forward to GO-Biz's continued support to extend and scale this impactful model.

NORTHSTAR

Powered by **REV HUB**

