

CONTACT:

Kelsey Ryan

Senior Manager, Marketing & Communications, Redefine Alliance

[kryan@redefinealliance.org](mailto:kryan@redefinealliance.org) | (202) 810.5556

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **California Launches a Second Cohort of CA RISE Following Strong Early Results from First Statewide Employment Social Enterprise Initiative**

*On the heels of an evaluation that showed significant statewide value, the nation-leading CA RISE program is slated to return for its second cohort in 2026.*

SACRAMENTO, CA (May 29, 2026) – California is launching the next phase of its nation-leading investment in employment social enterprises (ESEs), which are businesses that provide jobs, training, and support to people breaking through barriers to employment, including homelessness, incarceration, foster care involvement, substance use, or mental health challenges.

The announcement comes alongside the release of the [CA RISE Final Evaluation Report](#), which documents the impact of the inaugural California Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (CA RISE) – the nation's first-ever statewide ESE investment. Established in 2021 through Senate Bill 193 and funded by the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), CA RISE provided \$25 million in flexible capital and capacity-building support to 61 employment social enterprises across 16 counties.

In just 15 months, participating ESEs generated more than \$155.9 million in new earned revenue, hired 3,887 new employees, and secured 83 public-sector contracts and grants totaling more than \$38 million.

The evaluation also found that:

- 70% of participating ESEs increased earned revenue
- 75% increased employee compensation
- 66% expanded training and upskilling opportunities
- 61% increased supportive services for employees

- 87% grew their knowledge of public-sector funding and support systems

“CA RISE demonstrates that investing in employment social enterprises strengthens businesses while creating pathways to economic mobility for Californians who have too often been excluded from opportunity,” said Greg Ericksen. “These results show that California can grow a more inclusive economy by investing in businesses that reinvest in people and communities.”

The report highlights how ESEs serve as both economic engines and workforce-development partners, helping individuals stabilize their lives, build skills, and transition into quality employment. Across the cohort, participating ESEs expanded business operations, launched new products and business lines, strengthened partnerships with government agencies and employers, and increased wages and career advancement opportunities for employees.

Building on the success of the inaugural cohort, California’s 2025–2026 state budget includes \$17 million for CA RISE 2.0, which will launch later this year. Applications for the second cohort are expected to open in summer 2026, with programming beginning in the fall. CA RISE will continue supporting employment social enterprises through flexible funding, technical assistance, peer learning, and public-sector partnership development, helping ESEs scale sustainable businesses while creating quality jobs and advancing economic mobility statewide.

The CA RISE Final Evaluation Report was developed by Cause IMPACTS and is available at [redefinealliance.org/cariseeval](https://redefinealliance.org/cariseeval).

## **ABOUT REDEFINE ALLIANCE**

Redefine Alliance invests in employment social enterprises (ESEs) – businesses that provide jobs, training, and support to people breaking through barriers to employment. Redefine partners with these businesses and the entrepreneurs who lead them – providing capital, capacity, and community – to amplify their transformative impact. Since 1997, Redefine Alliance has invested in 363 ESEs in 42 states and DC. Collectively, these partnerships have helped 157,100 people enter the workforce and generated more than \$3.1 billion in revenue that is reinvested in employee success – creating a ripple effect that strengthens families and communities and helps build an economy that works. For everyone. For more information, visit [redefinealliance.org](https://redefinealliance.org).