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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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63 California–Based Employment Social Enterprises Awarded $13.2 Million to Strengthen Pathways to Economic Opportunity

Through the CA RISE program, California is investing $13.2 million in 63 organizations that use business as a tool to create employment, training, and economic mobility for Californians overcoming barriers to work.

SACRAMENTO [October 16, 2026] – Redefine Alliance is proud to celebrate the newest grant recipients of the California Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (CA RISE), a statewide program investing in businesses that create jobs, provide on-the-job training, and offer supportive services to people facing barriers to employment.

The 63 organizations selected for the 2026 CA RISE cohort represent communities across California and operate across a diverse range of industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, and environmental conservation.

The cohort includes:

- 20 organizations preparing to launch new employment social enterprises;
- 24 organizations strengthening existing employment social enterprises; and
- 19 organizations expanding established employment social enterprises and growing employment opportunities.

Creating employment and economic mobility across California

Employment social enterprises are revenue-generating businesses that provide paid employment, on-the-job training, and supportive services to people who have experienced employment barriers such as homelessness, incarceration, poverty, disability, substance-use challenges, or limited access to traditional employment.

CA RISE recipients were selected through a competitive statewide application process. Selected organizations cumulatively generated just under $1 billion in revenue in 2025 and employed over 6,000 California residents.

The selected cohort reflects the diversity of California, in both geography and in demographics. Grantee organizations are located across 17 counties, with leadership teams that are rooted in the communities they serve. Roughly 80% of grantees organizations are women-owned or led, and nearly two-thirds have leadership teams that include people who are BIPOC or who have lived experience of employment barriers.

Redefine Alliance and CalOSBA kicked off the second CA RISE cohort on October 13 and 14 at Homeward Bound of Marin in Novato, bringing together all the grantees from across California. Through workshops, peer learning, and a site visit to Planting Justice in El Sobrante, participants explored strategies to strengthen their businesses and expand employment opportunities for people facing barriers to work.

Supporting businesses at every stage of development

In addition to grant funding, recipients will participate in a statewide learning community, where they will receive technical assistance designed to strengthen their businesses, employment programs, leadership, and long-term financial sustainability.

Recent recipients include:

- **DESTINATION CRENSHAW** in Los Angeles is preparing to launch a Cultural Tourism and Visitor Experience employment social enterprise that leverages LA's public art corridor and cultural programming. They intend to provide paid employment and workforce training for residents of the South LA community.
- **GOOD DIRT COLLECTIVE** in Fresno, which operates a pottery business and will use CA RISE funding to empower young women impacted by foster care to find joy through pottery, employment, and mentorship.
- **RISE UP INDUSTRIES** in San Diego manufactures high-quality metal components while supporting justice-impacted participants to earn their CNC machine operator apprenticeship certificates. This CA RISE grant and technical assistance will allow them to expand into aerospace, defense, and OEM manufacturing opportunities, which will create additional quality jobs for participants with barriers to work.

"A person can build economic power when they have steady work, stronger finances, and a better quality of life. Employers like ESEs help create that momentum by opening pathways to quality jobs, and CA RISE is scaling the path to quality jobs for more people across California. Redefine Alliance is honored to continue our partnership with CalOSBA and Lendistry to support CA RISE," said Maria Kim, President and CEO of Redefine Alliance.

Building on California's leadership

CA RISE is funded by the State of California through CalOSBA and implemented in partnership with Redefine Alliance (as program lead) and Lendistry (as fiscal agent).

The initiative builds on the first CA RISE cohort, launched in 2024 with 61 employment social enterprises operating across 16 California counties. The program represents one of the country's largest public investments specifically dedicated to growing employment social enterprises and expanding employment opportunities for people who face systemic barriers to work.

View the complete list of 2026 CA RISE recipients, locations, award amounts, and profiles at redefinealliance.org/carise-2627-grantees/.

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About CalOSBA

The California Office of the Small Business Advocate supports economic growth by providing resources and support to California's small businesses, nonprofits, and startups. Its mission is to help California small-business owners find and navigate resources, programs, and regulations so they can start, manage, grow, become more resilient, and thrive. For more information, visit calosba.ca.gov.

About Redefine Alliance

Redefine Alliance invests in employment social enterprises — businesses that provide jobs, training, and support to people breaking through barriers to employment. Redefine Alliance partners with these businesses and the entrepreneurs who lead them, providing capital, capacity, and community to amplify their impact. For more information, visit redefinealliance.org.

About Lendistry

B.S.D. Capital, Inc. dba Lendistry is a minority-led financial technology company and Community Development Financial Institution that provides innovative lending products and access to grant programs for small businesses. For more information, visit lendistry.com.