



California Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise (CA RISE)

CA RISE Overview

The [California Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise \(CA RISE\)](#) was created in 2021 by Senate Bill No. 193 (Government Code Section 11788) to accelerate economic mobility and inclusion for individuals that experience employment barriers.

In partnership with the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), [REDF](#) serves as program lead for this \$25 million investment and will deliver customized technical assistance to businesses across the state that employ, train, and support talented Californians overcoming barriers to employment.

The purpose of CA RISE is to provide funding and technical assistance to employment social enterprises (ESEs) across California by connecting them with local public partners, training providers, and private sector employers to significantly expand opportunities for people who are typically not served through traditional workforce systems.

CA RISE Program Offerings

ESEs selected for CA RISE through a competitive grant process will receive a one-time grant of between \$100,000 – \$500,000 to support investments related to the sustainable growth of their business, increased economic mobility among their participant employees, or, in some cases, both. *(Grant award amounts will be determined by the ESE's operating budget. Ranges and corresponding grant award amounts will be detailed at the time of the application release.)*

All CA RISE grantees will receive customized, in-depth capacity building in the areas of sustainable growth and economic mobility:

- **Sustainable Growth:** Investments in the ESE business to help improve financial strength and grow sustainably long-term, increasing the revenue earned and the number of people to be employed.
- **Economic Mobility:** Improving the economic outcomes, typically measured by income, of individuals employed by ESEs (e.g., credentialing, (pre)apprenticeship, other forms of direct upskilling/stabilization)

- **ESE Fundamentals:** Information for small businesses that do not qualify for CA RISE but are curious about the ESE model and seek to understand what it would take to become an ESE. No grant funding is available for this opportunity.

After being selected for CA RISE through the competitive grant process, grantees will have access to:

- Cohort-based and one-to-one customized technical assistance;
- Cohort-based training on two learning tracks: Sustainable Growth and Economic Mobility;
- A suite of tools and learning modules on REDFworkshop (REDF's internal resource platform)
- Assistance enrolling in additional government programs (for example, [SNAP Employment & Training](#))
- Relationship management from a REDF staff member; and
- Peer consulting from other local employment social enterprises.

What is an Employment Social Enterprise (ESE)?

ESEs are for-profit or non-profit organizations that earn revenue through the sale of a good or service produced by employees overcoming barriers to work. Each entity should have a stated mission that they exist specifically for the purpose of providing employment, training, and supportive services to people facing barriers to work. Program outcomes are just as important as business outcomes to ESEs.

Additional characteristics of Employment Social Enterprises (ESE) include:

- Are revenue-generating businesses and may use fundraising to support program costs
- Span many diverse industries (e.g., food production, hospitality, aerospace, construction, manufacturing, staffing services)
- May serve populations with multiple barriers to employment, or may have one focus population;
- Can offer transitional or permanent employment to individuals breaking through barriers to employment
- Offers supportive services and targeted programming that enables employee success and helps remove barriers

Check out our [ESE Explainer Video](#) for a visual of how an ESE operates!

CA RISE Program Requirements

The following criteria are scored during the application process to award the competitive grant:

Has a demonstrated track record of achieving specific outcomes related to economic inclusion, stability, and mobility that meets the following criteria:

1. A clear and strong business model that demonstrates revenue growth and potential for further growth and scale
2. A comprehensive and data-driven program model that supports a quality employment social enterprise job that prioritizes long-term outcomes for its employees and demonstrates strong results
3. Strong leadership that presents a vision for the employment social enterprise that encompasses realistic growth, expansion, and deepening impact and demonstrates commitment to racial equality in the employment social enterprise
4. It is in a stable financial position and possesses the capacity to work with a small business technical assistance center and to implement recommendations that are offered by a small business technical assistance center

Program Expectations & Time Commitment

- CA RISE Programmatic Expectations:

- Have at least one member of the leadership team that participates in the cohort meetings
- Provide data to support measurement of key performance indicators for CA RISE at established intervals (e.g., financial statements, number of participants, feedback surveys)
- Meet with relationship manager at established frequency
- Take baseline assessment within specified time period
- Use grant funding in the manner proposed and approved

- CA RISE Time Commitment:

- 18-month programmatic commitment (Jan 2024-June 2025)
- 3 to 5 hours per month for CA RISE programming (e.g., cohort meetings, relationship manager meetings, workshops)
- 1-3 hours in February 2024 to complete the baseline assessment surveys
- Additional time commitment for technical assistance taken on outside of the cohort structure

Anticipated Schedule (*Subject to Change)

- Pre-Application Webinar - 9/28

- This webinar is the first step in the application process

- All organizations applying for CA RISE must view this webinar to continue the application process
- **Pre-Application Available – 9/28 – 10/20**
 - Interested organizations watch the webinar and complete the pre-application by 10/20
 - Pre-applications are reviewed, and organizations are notified of eligibility
- **Application Available – End of October**
 - Application links will be sent to certified ESEs after their pre-application is reviewed
 - Information about the application selection criteria will be sent via email with the application link along with an instructional video.
- **Application Review Period – Mid December**
 - Applications are reviewed against a scoring rubric and compliance is conducted
 - Additional questions maybe asked during compliance review
- **Award Notification & Contracting – Late December into Early January**
 - CA RISE is a competitive grant process
 - Selected ESEs will be notified of award after a legal / compliance review
 - Selected ESEs will receive a program contract and need to sign the contract to receive grant funding and participate in the CA RISE program

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