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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**REDF Awards \$3.9 Million to 13 Growth-Stage Employment Social Enterprises to Expand Fair-Chance Hiring Opportunities**

*With a commitment to trust-based philanthropy and equity, REDF's Growth Portfolio provides three years of unrestricted funding, tailored capacity-building support, and hands-on coaching and partnership to social enterprises advancing economic inclusion and mobility.*

San Francisco (January 4, 2023) – As a core component of its work to build a more inclusive economy, REDF (the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund) is pleased to announce \$3.9 million in grants to 13 high-impact employment social enterprises through its [Growth Portfolio program](#). Of the businesses selected for funding, 69% are led by people of color and 46% by leaders who share the lived experience of those they employ.

All grantees operate as employment social enterprises (ESEs), purpose-driven businesses that provide paying jobs, training, and supportive services to people overcoming workforce barriers, including opportunity youth, emerging adults, refugees, asylees, and people who have experienced homelessness, justice system involvement, domestic violence, trafficking, and/or substance use and mental health challenges.

A leading venture philanthropy, REDF is proud to invest in these ESEs as proven levers for advancing economic inclusion and mobility among people who have strong talents to contribute to our communities but have faced barriers to employment and are excluded from all the benefits that a stable job provides.

“In the face of continued economic uncertainty and upheaval, we know one thing for certain: our economy works best when it works for everyone. REDF proudly invests in employment social enterprises nationwide because we know their work offers a shining example of how inclusive hiring and workforce development practices are good for people, business, and our communities,” said Karen Chern, Growth Portfolio Director at REDF. “We are eager to roll up our sleeves and partner with these 13 businesses over the next three years in support of their growth goals and the long-term success of their employees.”

Forming the third cohort of REDF's Growth Portfolio, each ESE will receive three years of unrestricted grant funding totaling \$300,000, along with three years of customized capacity-

building support and advisory services designed to increase their reach, sustainability, and impact as vital centers for equitable workforce development. With the addition of this cohort, REDF now supports 36 businesses in the Growth Portfolio, its largest grant portfolio to date.

Together, these 13 mission-driven businesses provide quality jobs and career opportunities across a range of industries in 10 states:

- [Bikes Not Bombs](#) (Boston, MA): A bicycle repair and sales shop employing young people
- [CommunityWorks](#) (Denver, CO): A temporary staffing agency employing people who have been homeless, impacted by the justice system, or face other barriers to employment
- [CONBODY](#) (New York, NY): A fitness studio employing individuals impacted by the justice system
- [EMERGE Connecticut](#) (New Haven, CT): A construction business employing individuals impacted by the justice system
- [Freedom a la Cart](#) (Columbus, OH): A cafe and catering operation employing survivors of human trafficking
- [The Forestry and Fire Recruitment Program](#) (Azusa, CA): A wildland firefighting operation employing individuals impacted by the justice system
- [Global Neighborhood](#) (Spokane, WA): A thrift store employing refugees and asylees
- [MADE by DWC](#) (Los Angeles, CA): A retail boutique, cafe, and candle-maker employing women who are or have been homeless
- [Missoula Works](#) (Missoula, MT): A staffing agency and home improvement company employing people who have been homeless, impacted by the justice system, or face other barriers to employment
- [Nu-Way Staffing](#) (Atlanta, GA): A staffing agency employing individuals impacted by the justice system
- [OIC Strategic Integration](#) (Oakland Park, FL): A public cleaning and maintenance company employing people who have been homeless, impacted by the justice system, or face other barriers to employment
- [Urban Alchemy](#) (San Francisco, CA): A community health, safety, and maintenance enterprise employing individuals impacted by the justice system
- [Weld Seattle](#) (Seattle, WA): A construction company employing individuals impacted by the justice system

In year one of the three-year partnership, all members of the Growth Portfolio will complete a comprehensive Baseline Assessment, which REDF will use to tailor capacity-building supports in areas of business planning, program design, operations, human capital, and fundraising. Grantees will also receive one-on-one coaching with the goal of helping them leverage their strengths to expand employment opportunities, increase organizational revenue and sustainability, and continue to enhance long-term outcomes for employees and their communities.

“REDF has equipped our employment social enterprise with the connections, financial resources and capacity building support to accelerate our business growth and community impact,” said Michael Hollingsworth, Founder of Nu-Way Staffing. “The Growth Portfolio will enable us to offer more fair-chance and gainful employment opportunities and program support initiatives to returning citizens. We look forward to partnering with REDF over the next three years to help remove the barriers to employment for all deserving returning citizens.”

Informed by the feedback of the ESEs we partner with, past program outcomes, and our commitment to DEI, the Growth Portfolio is designed and continuously refined [to support](#) equitable and inclusive recruitment, selection, and support of grantee partners. This includes offering a transparent, streamlined, and supportive application process to enhance accessibility and reduce applicant burden, and awarding unrestricted funding to support sustainability and invest with trust.

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## **ABOUT REDF**

REDF invests in employment social enterprises (ESEs) — businesses that provide jobs, training, and support to people breaking through barriers to employment. REDF partners with these businesses and the entrepreneurs who lead them — providing capital, capacity, and community — to amplify their transformative impact. Since 1997, REDF has invested in more than 238 ESEs in 33 states and DC. Collectively these partnerships have helped 86,000 people enter the workforce and generate more than \$1.6 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 [www.redf.org](http://www.redf.org).