



# Microenterprise Collaborative of Inland Southern California

Strategic Plan  
for 2025–2027

[microbizinsocal.org](http://microbizinsocal.org)

[2]

# Build Capacity

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To accomplish its mission to create and grow sustainable small businesses and job development by supporting micro business development agencies, the Microenterprise Collaborative of Inland Southern California will implement a three-year (2025-2027) strategic plan that will convene, build, and support the work of our Partners dedicated to small business development.



# SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS

Nonprofit and government agencies provide training, technical assistance, support services and access to capital to individuals starting and growing small businesses.

Business incubators, counselors and workshop trainers, micro-lending, business owner networks, labs and maker spaces for design and innovation are examples of the kinds of services, programs, and products provided by small business programs.

Most of these are offered free or very low-cost for low and moderate-income individuals and disadvantaged and underserved populations such as people of color, women, immigrants, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and veterans.



## COLLABORATE

Convene the network of Small Business Programs to foster collaboration, reduce competition and redundancies, and leverage resources. Strengthen brand identity to be recognized as a leader in the small business sector.



## GAIN SUPPORT

Gain support for Small Business Programs by conducting outreach on behalf of the network, brokering connections with funding entities such as government agencies and foundations, and acting as a funding intermediary when appropriate. Expand the network of resources, ensuring alignment with MECISC's mission and serving the public interest.



## STRENGTHEN AND IMPROVE

Strengthen and improve Small Business Programs by providing professional development programs and technical assistance, conducting research, promoting performance standards, and strategically integrating AI, automation, CRM, social media, and advanced data collection methods to enhance operational efficiency and drive informed decision-making.



## MAXIMIZE OUTREACH

Maximize the outreach of Small Business Programs by providing a web-based directory of programs and services, conducting marketing campaigns, communicating information on the programs and services to the general public, and expanding geographic reach into Los Angeles and Orange Counties.



## REPRESENT PROGRAMS

Represent Small Business Programs in public policy efforts, public education, and regional economic development efforts to strengthen MECISC's position as a leader in supporting small businesses.

[4]

The following is a list of action the Microenterprise Collaborative will implement to support the partnerships of Financial Institutions and Small Business Programs:



#### **SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE TOOL**

Demonstrate to bank staff how to use the Small Business Assistance Tool (web-based directory) to help business owners find the assistance they need to start and grow their businesses.



#### **HIGHLIGHT SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS**

Conduct presentations to bank staff to highlight Small Business Programs and how they work in partnership with Financial Institutions to develop and help retain small business clients.



#### **LEARN BANKING TRENDS**

Utilize the Financial Institution Advisory Board to learn banking industry trends and gain advice and recommendations for improving partnership building with Small Business Programs.



#### **MARKET SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS**

Market Small Business Programs to Financial Institutions using the weekly newsletter and social media.

## FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Banks and credit unions are often the first connections a small business owner makes when searching to start or grow a business.

Financial institutions offer a number of services that are key to a small business operation, such as credit cards, lines of credit, payroll services, and business checking and savings accounts.

Bank branch staff and business loan officers want to build long-term relationships with business owners and look to small business programs to help with that effort. Financial institution staff want to:

- a) give the proper referrals that will help business owners address their needs and they want
- b) retain their customers while working in partnership with Small Business Programs.

## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Government Agencies are an integral part of small business operations. Many times, government agency staff will connect with small business owners when they first start a business, plan to grow, or are in crisis.

It is critical for government agencies to be aware of the Small Business Programs available to assist at these times and feel confident in referring them.

Government Agencies can also lead public education efforts to improve small business development for their constituents and seek federal funding for this purpose.



### DEMONSTRATE VALUE

Convene Government Agencies and Small Business Programs and demonstrate the value of the Small Business Assistance Tool to support referrals by government staff, and determine methods to strengthen local small business development.



### COLLECT DATA

Collect Small Business Program data using data-backed insight through AI tools and success stories and conduct public education on the importance of small business development to support government investment in the effort.



### ADVOCATE COLLABORATION

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The Microenterprise Collaborative can support foundation investment in small business development in the following ways:



### **COMPELLING COMMUNICATION**

MECISC will position itself as a recognized leader in the small business sector, offering clear and compelling communications that promote its brand while aligning with nonprofit values and serving the public interest.



### **DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS**

MECISC's partnerships with both nonprofit and for-profit entities will strictly adhere to its nonprofit mission to serve the public interest, ensuring equitable resource allocation and expanding its support network.



### **SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS**

Represent small business development with other community development efforts to ensure inclusion of support for Small Business Programs in funding priorities.

## CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

Foundations address critical issues of our time and provide operating and program support to the effort of improving economic conditions for underserved low and moderate-income individuals.

Small business development provides the means for these target groups to achieve equity and a viable income.

Small business development also improves the quality of life and economic success within communities.



The Microenterprise Collaborative must have the capacity to lead small business development efforts in the region. What follows are the essential elements the Collaborative needs to achieve strong organizational capacity.



#### **SECURE AND IMPLEMENT PLAN**

Secure the facilities, technology, and staffing to implement the strategic plan.



#### **IMPROVE**

MECISC will integrate AI, automation, CRM, data collection, and social media to boost efficiency, improve client management, and drive data-informed decisions in support of its mission.



#### **SECURE FUNDING**

Secure foundation and government funding to support the Microenterprise Collaborative, using AI-driven insights to showcase measurable results and outcomes.



#### **MAXIMIZE SUPPORT**

Maximize funding support through opportunities for earned income and by acting as a funding intermediary.



[ 8 ]

# Measure Success

The Microenterprise Collaborative will measure success in the following ways:



Acknowledge improvements with Small Business Program capacity such as increases in funding support, partner referrals, and program performance.



Collect data using data-backed insights through AI tools and success stories that indicate increases and improvements in the number of small businesses served, capital accessed, jobs created or retained.



Promote policy successes and new partnerships that benefit small business development.



# Action Steps for 2026

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## 01 Convene Nonprofit, CDFI, and Ecosystem Stakeholders

- Host one regional convening of nonprofit technical assistance providers, CDFIs, and ecosystem stakeholders (government agencies, cities, chambers, etc).
- Use the convening to map services, identify gaps, and surface opportunities for new collaborations to better serve LMI entrepreneurs.
- Produce a short summary of key themes and next steps to share with attendees and funders.

## 02 Convene the Financial Institution Advisory Committee

- Host one Financial Institution Advisory Committee convening focused on gaps for the small business owners, along with best practices for inclusive small business banking and expanded access to responsible capital.
- Capture institutional commitments (e.g., pilots, referral pathways, co-branded events) and integrate them into MECISC's partnership work.

## 03 Strengthen Cross-Sector Collaboration and Referrals (New Partnerships Focus)

- Identify and engage at least 5 new prospective partners (e.g., banks, CDFIs, cities, workforce agencies, chambers) to join the MECISC network.
- Provide each new partner with a brief onboarding to MECISC tools (Small Business Assistance Tool, website, newsletter) so they can connect entrepreneurs to resources.

# Action Steps for 2026

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## 04 **Advance Data, Storytelling, and Visibility**

- Collect basic outcome data and stories from partners to illustrate small business impact (business starts, capital accessed, jobs created/retained).
- Share at least one “microbusiness impact snapshot” highlighting trends and partner successes across the four-county region.
- Feature partners regularly in MECISC communications to reinforce the Collaborative’s role as a connector and thought leader.

## 05 **Build Internal Capacity to Sustain the Plan**

- Secure the funding and staffing necessary to support 2026 convenings, partnership development, and data efforts.
- Continue integrating CRM, automation, and AI tools to track partnerships, convening outcomes, and referrals.