



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ChicoSTART

Date: June 16, 2026



ChicoSTART Distributes SEED 2.5 Microgrants Across Northern California to Accelerate Small Business Growth

June 16, 2026 - Chico, CA: ChicoSTART is proud to announce the successful allocation of **(30)** SEED 2.5 Micro Grants to entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout Northern California, providing critical funding and support to businesses that are creating jobs, strengthening local economies, and expanding opportunities in rural and underserved communities.

Funded through the **California Employment Training Panel (ETP)**, the SEED 2.5 initiative was designed to help entrepreneurs overcome barriers to business growth by pairing targeted technical assistance with direct microgrant funding.

In partnership with the **California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce**, the 30 grant recipients represent a diverse mix of industries including manufacturing, technology, food and agriculture, professional services, retail, creative industries, and community-based enterprises.

"Small businesses are the core of our regional economy," said **Eva Shepherd-Nicoll, Executive Director of ChicoSTART**. "These micro grants provide more than just funding—they create momentum. By combining capital with training, mentorship, and technical assistance, we are helping entrepreneurs move from ideas to implementation, from survival to growth, and from uncertainty to opportunity."

“True economic resilience is impossible without equity, and by intentionally lowering barriers for our minority owned and under-resourced enterprises, we aren’t just funding individual businesses - we are investing in the generational wealth and collective strength of our entire community.” - **Oscar Garcia, Senior Vice President, California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce**

Grant recipients completed business development training and received technical assistance focused on areas such as business planning, financial management, marketing, operations, customer acquisition, and growth strategies. The micro grants are being used to support business expansion activities, equipment purchases, workforce development, technology upgrades, product development, and market growth initiatives.

The SEED 2.5 program is part of ChicoSTART's broader mission to strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship throughout California's rural and underserved North State regions. By investing directly in local entrepreneurs, the program helps create sustainable economic growth while supporting the next generation of business leaders.

ChicoSTART anticipates that the businesses supported through this funding round will continue to generate measurable economic impact through job creation, increased revenues, expanded services, and long-term business sustainability.

For more information about ChicoSTART and its entrepreneurial support programs, visit www.chicostart.com.

Questions? Contact Eva Shepherd-Nicoll, Executive Director, ChicoSTART at eva@chicostart.com or Oscar Garcia, Senior Vice President, CAHCC oscar@cahcc.com.

About ChicoSTART: ChicoSTART supports and enriches Northern California’s Entrepreneurial Ecosystem by providing small businesses, entrepreneurs, and startups with the resources they need to succeed. Our platform includes shared office amenities, mentoring, workshops, internships, tech talks, student-to-business projects, entrepreneurial events, satellite office programs, and anything else that helps our core mission of helping startups succeed. As a GO-BIZ iHub for the Far North, the Chicostart ecosystem includes, but is not limited to, investors, technologists, entrepreneurs, students, educators, local businesses, agencies, and mentors.

About California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce

The California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce (CHCC) and its membership network of 130 Hispanic and diverse chambers and business associations advocate for the interests of over 1.8 million Hispanic and diverse-owned enterprises throughout California. The CHCC seeks to elevate the issues and needs affecting these businesses and communities within the broader California and national economic agendas. ###