

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ChicoSTART Awarded CA State Small Business Opportunity Program (SBOP) Grant to Expand Equitable Access for North State Entrepreneurs



Chico, CA - August 25, 2026: To continue to **expand entrepreneurial empowerment** in the North State, **ChicoSTART** is proud to announce its selection as a grant recipient for the California State Small Business Opportunity Program (SBOP) and SSBCI. This funding will provide free legal, accounting, and capital-readiness technical assistance to underserved and rural small businesses across Northern California."

The State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) Small Business Opportunity Program (SBOP) is a federal grant administered by the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA) designed to expand equitable access to capital and strengthen California's small business innovation ecosystems under existing Accelerate CA iHubs statewide system.

Through SBOP funding, organizations like ChicoSTART serve as technical assistance navigators, delivering critical legal, accounting, and financial advisory subject matter expert referrals and services to Very Small Businesses (VSBs), Small Manufacturing Enterprises (SMEs), and Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individual (SEDI)-owned businesses.

The ultimate goal of this program is to lower historical barriers to investment and help these underserved businesses become capital- and procurement-ready so they can successfully secure debt, equity, bonding, and non-dilutive funding.

"Every great business starts with an idea, but ideas need guidance, connections, and access to capital to succeed. Through the Accelerate CA iHub, SCALE, and SBOP initiatives, ChicoSTART is helping entrepreneurs across Northern California turn innovation into opportunity. We're building stronger businesses, preparing founders for investment and procurement opportunities, and ensuring that entrepreneurs in rural communities have access to the same high-quality resources as those in larger metropolitan areas. When our small businesses succeed, our entire region prospers." — Eva Shepherd-Nicoll, Executive Director, ChicoSTART

How Local Businesses Can Access Support:

North State entrepreneurs and small businesses looking to access services, connections, and resources can learn more at ChicoSTART.com or email info@chicostart.com. How can we help?

For all press inquiries, please contact eva@chicostart.com.

ChicoSTART's mission is to empower - entrepreneurs, startups and businesses with resources, training and community support needed to start, grow and thrive throughout Northern California. ChicoSTART is 1 of 13 designated iHubs awarded the statewide Accelerate CA Inclusive Innovation Hub (iHUB2) grant from CalOSBA. Combined, ChicoSTART's iHUB2, TAP and SCALE designation covers over 20+ counties in Northern California, focusing on building the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem for equitable access to entrepreneurial resources with inclusive ecosystem expansion into our rural and diverse communities. ###