



## 2024 Impact Report

# Your Investment Makes an Impact



For many women, entrepreneurship isn't just about bringing their dream to life—it's about creating financial security, generational wealth, and economic independence. Yet, all too often, a simple lack of financial confidence stands in the way of business success. Talking about money, about debt, about credit can be emotionally triggering for so many of us, and so we avoid it. Women persistently report feeling less financially successful and having less financial confidence than men.

This is why WEV exists.

Our work begins with setting a foundation of financial empowerment—mastering the “money mindset”. When our clients learn to manage their personal finances with confidence, they take the first crucial step toward financial security as individuals and business owners.

In 2024, WEV further expanded its financial literacy efforts through strategic partnerships and donations to ensure these vital resources were free to the women in the community who needed them most. We deepened our commitment to equipping women with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to build sustainable businesses and lasting economic stability.

This Impact Report tells the stories of women who have changed the trajectory of their lives through economic empowerment—building businesses, creating jobs, and, in turn, transforming the local economy. Every \$1 you have invested in WEV generates \$15 in the community. That is the power of your philanthropy. That is the power of women-led economic transformation.

Investing in women is not just an act of generosity—it is an economic imperative. The data is clear. The stories in this report will make it personal. A thriving community starts with financially confident women.

For over 30 years, WEV has been breaking down the barriers that hold women back by providing the entrepreneurial training, funding and business support necessary to move women from economic DE-pendence to economic IN-dependence.

Thank you for building a future where every woman has the opportunity, the resources, and the choice to live with dignity.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Nicki Parr".

**Nicki Parr**

CEO, Women's Economic Ventures

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## Thank you to former WEV Board Members who served in 2024.

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# Elevating Women and Transforming Lives

Your support provides resources at low to no-cost to women seeking financial independence through entrepreneurship - resulting in higher household incomes, more jobs, and a stronger local economy



## Economic Mobility

More than **50%** of returning WEV clients experience financial growth, with average household incomes growing by **\$17,359**.



In just two years, nearly **70%** of WEV-assisted businesses see sales growth with an average increase of **72%**.



**41%** of clients who initially reported \$0 in savings were able to save nearly \$5,000 over the course of a year.

**46%** of WEV clients starting at or below the federal poverty level increased their household income beyond this threshold.\*



**Your social return on investment is strong.** Every **\$1** you donate to WEV generates **\$15** in the local economy.



In the **last five years**, your investment empowered entrepreneurs to build or expand **1,495** impactful businesses and created or sustained **4,077** jobs – generating **\$167M** in sales and **\$14.2M** in local tax revenue.



**36%** of WEV-assisted Woman-Owned Businesses are employer-firms with at least one employee + the owner, compared to 10% nationally.

\*Federal poverty level is a household income of \$32,150 for a family of four.

# 2024 Population Empowered

Women's Economic Ventures is dedicated to the economic empowerment of women – cultivating the power within each woman to realize her dreams, achieve financial independence and succeed on her own terms. To achieve this mission, WEV provides linguistically appropriate programs, funding, and advisory services. While WEV's focus is on elevating the financial success of low-income women, we support and empower all individuals seeking services.

WEV  
Empowered  
**592**  
individuals



**82%**  
women

**68%**  
were low-income

**68%**  
people of color

Where WEV Clients Live



Santa Barbara County



Ventura County



Other

Primary Language



**49%**  
English



**43%**  
Spanish



**8%**  
Other/  
Unknown



# Recognitions & Collaborative Impact

## WEV Chosen as a 2024 California Nonprofit of the Year.

"I am proud to recognize Women's Economic Ventures as this year's Nonprofit of the Year. As Chair of the Senate Select Committee on the Nonprofit Sector it is my honor to choose a nonprofit that speaks to the state's goal of creating a California for all women. WEV has been a cornerstone of the business community for over 33 years in both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties and has supported thousands of women entrepreneurs. Congratulations to all involved in their success and thank you for your service to the central coast."

— **Senator Monique Limón**



WEV featured in the inaugural **Giving List Women Book** – telling the powerful stories of organizations investing in women while bringing awareness to the staggering fact that less than 2% of all charitable donations in the country are directed towards women's and girls' causes.

Pacific Coast Business Times recognized WEV's CEO, Nicki Parr, in the Who's Who in Non-Profits & Foundations issue.

**Collaborative Partnerships broaden reach, collectively empower more communities and advance economic mobility.**



- **Emprendimiento – Partners:**  
Children's Resource & Referral of Santa Barbara, Child Development Resources of Ventura County, Martin V. Smith School of Business & Economics, CSUCI
- **Get Your Small Business Online / Pon Tu Negocio en Linea, Partners:**  
City of Goleta, Economic Development Collaborative (EDC)
- **Financial Empowerment, Partners:**  
Catalyst Miami, Found LA, Housing Authority of Santa Barbara, Mexican Consulate of Oxnard, PEAC, Regarding Her, Small Business Majority
- **Smart Finances for Childcare Providers:**  
California Network of Women's Business Centers
- **STEMpreneurship, Partner:**  
Santa Barbara Women in STEM
- **Supercharge Your Small Business with AI, Partner:**  
Economic Development Collaborative (EDC), SCORE



# Access is Everything



## Annamaria Belokona

### Smart Entrepreneurial Training

“The most significant challenge I encountered, not just in my business endeavors but in life, was the war in Ukraine. Overnight, everything was thrown into chaos. All the achievements we had worked hard for came to a halt. I lost my business, my home, everything was gone. In 2022, I arrived in the United States as a refugee with nothing but a backpack and a determination to start anew. With the support from friends, family, and WEV, I reopened my video production company, AMfilm. Understanding the intricacies of business in a new country was paramount for me, the kindness and support from WEV, made the learning experience truly exceptional.”

## Deborah Deras and Bruna Jones

### Get Your Small Business Online

“In March 2020 my speaking engagements disappeared and my opportunities. I did what any entrepreneur in survival mode would do—I went to look for work. Feeling the weight of uncertainty, I saw one organization stood out – WEV.” After personal and professional pivots, Deborah joined WEV as an instructor. “I shifted from focusing on my devastation to focusing on service. Instead of feeling like a victim, I felt empowered. WEV gave me an opportunity—not just to rebuild my career—but to help others build theirs. Deborah has been teaching WEV’s Get Your Small Business Online program to help entrepreneurs increase their online sales. “One of my favorite students, Bruna—92 years young. After her husband passed, she joined WEV to learn technology, preparing to sell her business and retire on her terms.”







## Jonnie Williams, PsyD

### Explore Entrepreneurship & Advisory Services

“ I am a psychologist, I am systems change strategist, I am a mother, I am a spouse. As an Indigenous woman I've overcome many barriers, I am the first in my family to go to college, I am the first in my family to even think about owning a business, I am the first in my family to own a home. I am an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation (Bitterwater clan), and my Indigenous worldview informs everything that I do personally and professionally. ”

As an Indigenous trauma psychologist and entrepreneur, Dr. Williams founded Evolve Equity Psychology, Inc. to advance racial fairness and healing. WEV's Advisory support helped her refine her vision, develop a strong business model, and overcome imposter syndrome. Within weeks, she secured contracts and built a thriving team. Now, she is leading groundbreaking work to transform organizations and communities—paving the way for future generations to thrive.

## Salustia Garcia

### Emprendimiento, Child Care Cohort

“ My biggest success has been achieving dreams I never thought possible – owning my own business, obtaining my associate teaching credential and purchasing my first home with my husband – a dream come true, made possible by support I received from WEV. ”

Salustia always knew she wanted to create a nurturing space for children after seeing the positive outcomes of her son's preschool experience. She took the leap and opened her own home-based daycare. Through WEV's free Emprendimiento program, she learned vital business skills in Spanish - her first language - in a supportive and empowering setting. In addition to training that helped her organize her finances, she was awarded a stipend that enabled her to pay for child development classes at Oxnard College – and to purchase essential materials for the children in her daycare.



# Empowering Financial Futures and Broadening Impact

“ One of my favorite things about WEV's work in 2024 was partnering with other organizations to broaden reach and impact. Thanks to partners like Catalyst Miami, Regarding Her, Found LA, and Small Business Majority, WEV brought the Financial Empowerment program to communities nationwide. From exploring Credit Building in Florida to sharing Financial Basics with entrepreneurs in LA and DC, we were excited to share the programing and demystify financial concepts. ”

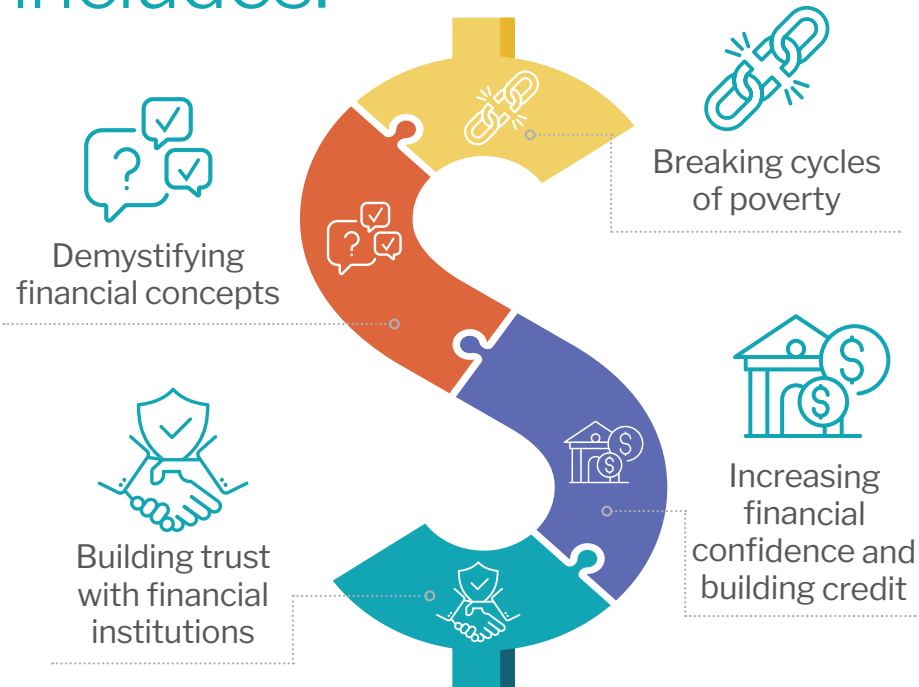
— Irene Kelly, WEV's Associate Director of Community Engagement



To open more doors to economic mobility, WEV's Financial Literacy Advisory Group (FLAG) works to unite local financial advocates, educators, banking partners, government officials and philanthropists to tackle economic barriers - offering free financial literacy resources to community members.



# Financial Empowerment includes:



## The Impact of Financial Empowerment:

**90%**

of participants report experiencing less stress when thinking about their finances after taking the program.

**89%**

of participants feel more confident in creating and adhering to a budget and report an increase in confidence in managing debt effectively.



“ One of the most important things was being able to share what I learned with my daughter. ”

— Ana Arce

Ana Arce is a first-generation college student, a mother, and an advocate for Central Coast Alliance United for A Sustainable Economy (CAUSE). She enrolled in WEV's Credit Builder class to improve her financial literacy and rebuild her credit. After completing the class, she not only strengthened her own financial future but also empowered her family and has become a strong advocate for financial literacy in our community.

*Ana Arce pictured with Senator Monique Limón at a WEV financial empowerment event.*

# Accelerating Action. Investing in Women.

## WEV's Community of Supporters.

WEV extends immense gratitude to our community of supporters – your financial investment is critical in WEV's ability to provide accessible and affordable financial resources to women. We could not do the work without you.



### League of Extraordinary Women

WEV's annual giving circle known as the League of Extraordinary Women **contribute to more than 80% of overall individual donations.**

We are proud to recognize the dedicated women and men whose collective and ongoing generosity fuels the mission.

#### Transformative Level (\$10,000 - \$25,000+)

Anonymous, Junemarie Justus, Equipt Women - Kelly Mooney, Nevins Family Foundation – Nanette Nevins, Sara Miller McCune, Women Connect4Good – Nancy O'Reilly

#### Extraordinary Level (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Carola Nicholson, Deborah Talmage, Julie Henley, Lynne Tahmisian, Meenal & Kris Kelkar, Melissa Livingston, Nancy Crouse, Ruth Tidwell, Tana Sommer-Belin

#### Luminary Level (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Andrew Winchester, Banks Pecht, DeAnna Steiger, Deborah Naish, Devyn Duex, Elise & William "Bill" Kearney, Eva Gans, Karen Smith Bogart, Linda Rossi, Naomi Dewey, Reese Spach, Renee Courington, UCLA Health – Robbie Gluckson, Vanessa & Alexander Marin

#### League Level (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

Alie Ortega-Botello, Alessandra Fantoni, Ali Schiller, Ali Farr McCarty, Alixe Mattingly, Andria Cohen, Angela Rosales, Ann Steinmetz, April Remnant, Barbara Aue,

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#### Individual Donors, 2024 (\$250 - \$999)

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## Trailblazer Society

Each year, WEV recognizes inspirational women with the Trailblazer Award. Honorees have paved the way for women in society to succeed through their passion, commitment, philanthropy, and sheer grit.

Ann Deal, Barbara Meister, Betsy Chess, Bonnie Weigel, Brenda Allison, Dee Duncan, Eleanor Van Cott, Ellen Brokaw, Gail Zannon, Hannah-Beth Jackson, Heidi Whitcomb, Iris Rideau, Jacqui Irwin, Jeannette Duncan, Junemarie Justus, Kathy Hartley, Kate McLean, Kate Silsbury, Lynda Nahra, Lynda Weinman, Mary Olson, Michelle Griffoul, Myra Harrison, Renee Grubb, Sara Miller McCune, Trudi Carey, Vanessa Bechtel

## Volunteers

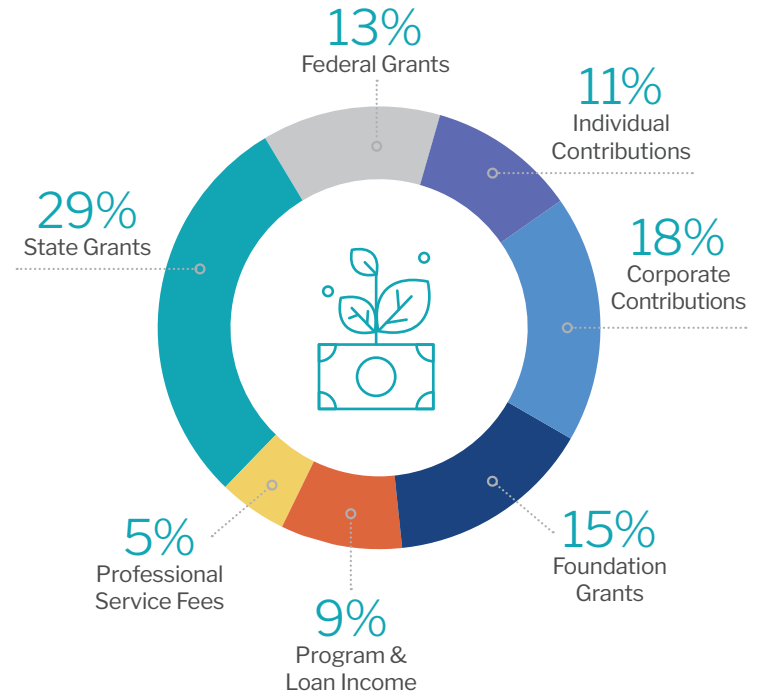
Alana Rivera, Alessandra Fantoni, Ale Ortega-Botello, Alex Craigie, Algely Linville, Allison Costa, Allison Duffee, Anjali Vichare, Ashley Gomez, Austin Blackert, Barbara Aue, Brittany Drozd, Caitlin Jennings, Candice Zhang, Caroline Bigelow, Carolyn McMahon, Chelsea Grande, Chris Hansson, Christina Gallagher, Cristi Silva, Danielle Edberg,

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## Financial Coaches

Gabriela Santana, Sergio Zepeda, Shelina Sayani, Stephanie Martinez and Vanessa Valerio

## WEV's Sources of Funding



## Corporate, Foundation & Government Supporters

Together we are stronger – corporations, foundations and government supporters strengthen WEV's capacity to offer affordable services and broaden impact. WEV appreciates the many local funders that championed the mission in 2024.

Amazon – Santa Barbara, Amgen Inc., Ann Jackson Family Foundation, Anonymous, Athens Services, Bank of America, Banks Coaching, BMO Bank, Boone Graphics, CA WBC Network, California Bank of Commerce, CalOSBA WBC-Enhancement Program, CDFI Fund, Chevron, Citizens Business Bank, City National Bank, City of Goleta, Coastal Building Maintenance Inc., County of Ventura, Cox Communications, CPCFA Cal IIP, Deckers Outdoor Corporation, Department of Financial Protection & Inclusion, E.J. Harrison & Sons Inc., Edison International, El Centro Building LLC, Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco, First Citizen's Bank, Foundation for California Community Colleges, Gartner, Go-Biz, Henry W. Bull Foundation, Hutton Parker Foundation, Jewish Community Foundation of New Mexico, John C. Mithun Foundation, Julius Gius Memorial Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, La Arcada Investment Corporation, LA Loop, Martin V. Smith School of Business & Economics – CSUCI, Mechanics Bank, Montecito Bank and Trust, Morgan Stanley, Mosher Foundation, Myers, Widders, Gibson, Jones & Feingold LLP, Nasif, Hicks, Harris & Co, National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders, Nicholson & Schwartz, Ontraport, Oxnard Library, Pacific Coast Business Times, Pacific Premier Bank, PayPal, Rod Stiefvater Foundation, Santa Barbara Foundation, Santa Barbara Women for Good – Grapevine Giving Foundation, Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board, Santa Barbara Public Library, Santa Paula Chamber of Commerce, SBA Women's Business Center, SBCC Foundation, SoCal Gas, Target, The Towbes Foundation, Thrivent, TileCo Distributors Inc., Transition House, Tomchin Family Charitable Foundation, Uplift Central Coast, US Bank, Ventura County Community Foundation, Ventura County Credit Union, Ventura Public Library, Volentine Family Foundation, Wells Fargo, Williams-Corbett Foundation, Wood-Claeysens Foundation, Wurwand Foundation, Zegar Family Foundation



Photos courtesy Trinity Wheeler Photography



## Ways to Support

You accelerate action for women to achieve financial independence. To learn about ways to support WEV's mission or to donate, please follow the QR code.



# Thank you from the WEV team!

