

# 2025 IMPACT REPORT



**wev** | **35<sup>th</sup>**  
+ the power of you | **Anniversary**  
Celebrating 35 years of Supporting Women

# Your Investment Makes an Impact



When women are financially empowered, families thrive, businesses grow, communities become more resilient, and opportunity expands—not just for one individual, but for everyone connected to her.

Women's Economic Ventures' mission to economically empower women began 35 years ago. In the late 1980s, women faced significant barriers to financial independence. Although the Equal Credit Opportunity Act passed in 1974, it was still uncommon for women to access credit or secure a loan without a male co-signer.

While working with women experiencing physical, emotional, and economic abuse, WEV's founder, Marsha Bailey, recognized that entrepreneurship could be a pathway to financial independence—a way for women to build something of their own and reclaim agency over their lives.

Today, as CEO, I have the privilege of carrying this work forward—building on a 35-year legacy while continuing to expand access to the resources and support that make financial independence possible.

At WEV, we have evolved to meet this moment. Through financial education, entrepreneurial training, and advising, we support individuals at every stage of their journey—building not only skills, but confidence and long-term financial stability.

In this report, you will meet the women we empower and hear how timely access to support can transform lives. Highlights include Business of Care, which not only helps women build sustainable childcare businesses, but also increases access to quality childcare across our region—meeting a critical need for families and local employers. You will also learn about our new Credit Builder class pilot, designed to strengthen financial foundations and expand opportunities for clients.

This work is made possible by you: our community of donors, partners, and supporters. At a time when funding landscapes are shifting and demand for services continues to grow, your investment ensures that these resources remain accessible to those who need them most. You believe in entrepreneurship as a pathway to financial independence. You believe in what is possible when a community stands behind women and families.

Thank you for investing in a future where women don't just participate in the economy—they power it.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicki Parr', written over a white background.

**Nicki Parr**

*CEO, Women's Economic Ventures*

## WEV's Board of Directors

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# Elevating Women and Building Thriving Communities

Your support provides women with financial education and entrepreneurial resources at low to no cost – resulting in higher household incomes, jobs created, and greater financial stability achieved.



More than **50%** of returning WEV clients experience financial growth, with household income growing by an average of **\$10,000**.



**31%** of WEV clients who started with \$0 in savings were able to save an average of **\$6,688** after 15 months.

In the **last five years**, your investment empowered entrepreneurs to build or expand **1,646** impactful businesses and created or sustained **4,040** jobs – generating **\$162M** in sales and **\$13.8M** in local tax revenue.



**35%** of WEV-assisted Woman-Owned Businesses are employer-firms with at least one employee + the owner, compared to 10% nationally.

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



In just two years, **65%** of WEV-assisted businesses see sales growth, with an average increase of **85%**.

# 2025 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. While WEV's focus is on elevating the financial success of low-income women, we support and empower all individuals.

WEV Empowered  
**557**  
individuals

**89%**  
women

**80%**  
were low-income

**74%**  
people of color

Primary  
Language

**42%**  
English

**41%**  
Spanish

**17%**  
Other/  
Unknown

Economic  
Impact

**338**  
total business  
assisted

**32**  
new businesses  
launched

**758**  
jobs created  
or sustained

# Collaborating for Impact

WEV is part of the Women's Business Center (WBC) network—a national program supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration that expands access to entrepreneurship. As one of 21 WBCs in California, WEV contributes to a coordinated effort to increase economic opportunity statewide.

▶ Across California, WBCs support:

17,000+  
entrepreneurs annually

\$600M+  
in gross sales

20,000+  
jobs



*Keri Koehler, WEV's Impact Manager, presenting on measuring financial empowerment impact beyond traditional business metrics at the AWBC Leadership Conference.*



## Did you know?

Each year, the Association of WBCs presents the Marsha Bailey Leadership Award, named after WEV's founder for her significant contributions to the network and her dedication to women's entrepreneurship.



## Local Partnerships

America's Job Center of California  
Blue Sky Center  
Camarillo Library  
Carpinteria Library  
Child Development Resources of Ventura County  
Child Resource and Referral of Santa Barbara  
Economic Development Collaborative  
Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara  
Housing Authority San Buenaventura  
Martin V. Smith School of Business & Economics, CSUCI  
Mexican Consulate in Oxnard  
Oxnard Adult School  
Program for Effective Access to College  
Santa Barbara Public Library  
TO Arts  
Transition House  
Ventura County Credit Union  
Workforce Development Board of Santa Barbara County  
Workforce Development Board of Ventura County

“ We have been so grateful for our partnership with WEV. The Financial Empowerment workshops make a noticeable impact on the families we serve. Clients often share that the sessions helped them feel more confident about managing their money, setting financial goals, and understanding credit and savings in practical ways.

— **Gina Whitefoot,**  
Associate Director, Transition House

# Programming that Empowers

“



**Laura Abrignani**

**Coastal Well Woman**  
Smart Entrepreneurial Training

*“Women deserve better care and I wanted to provide that on my own terms.”*

Laura Abrignani is a nurse practitioner who, after more than 30 years in women’s healthcare, saw a gap she could no longer ignore—women navigating menopause without the support they deserved. What began as a vision over a decade ago became Coastal Well Woman, a practice dedicated to personalized menopause care.

Laura had known about WEV for decades, holding onto the idea of building her own business until the time was right. In 2023, she enrolled in the SET program and gained the roadmap, financial tools, and confidence to bring her vision to life. When traditional lending was not an option, WEV saw the opportunity—helping her secure funding and move forward. Today, Coastal Well Woman is growing, with Laura preparing to hire her first employee and transforming how women experience care.

”

*“I was inspired to start my business so I could create connections in my community, set my own hours, and be more present for my young son.”*

In 2016, Jeanne Sikoff turned that vision into Zander’s Game House—a welcoming space where people of all ages and neurodiversity can connect through play and board games. What began as a community-centered idea quickly grew into a beloved local hub. Through WEV, Jeanne gained more than business support—she shifted her mindset, learning to move through fear with confidence and clarity. As demand grew, so did her vision. In 2025, she doubled her space to 4,000 square feet, expanding opportunities and welcoming more individuals. Today, Jeanne has been recognized by the West Ventura County Business Alliance, the Pacific Coast Business Times, and Autism Society of Ventura County for being an inclusive, community-driven small business owner.



**Jeanne Sikoff**

**Zander's Game House**  
Business and Advisory Training



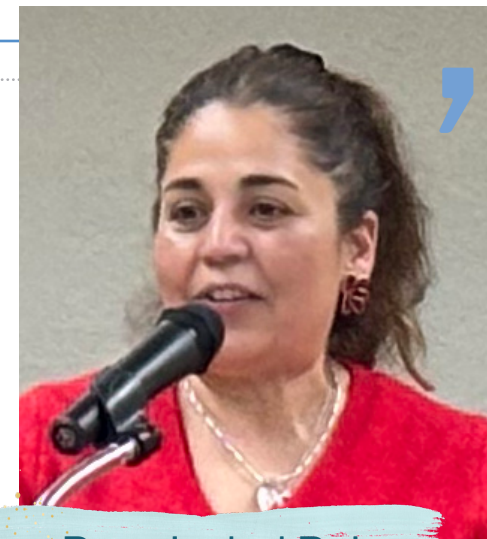
**Soraya Simi**  
Imagiros Films  
Advisory Services

*“I fell into independent filmmaking somewhat by accident. The pandemic hit a year after I graduated from film school, and it was tough to get into the industry. It sparked an entrepreneurial drive to figure it out.”*

Soraya Simi launched Imagiros Films, a production company dedicated to documentary, commercial, and nonprofit storytelling. What began as necessity quickly grew into a thriving creative business. She also founded 805 Film Collective, a grassroots network now connecting more than 1,000 filmmakers across the Central Coast. As her work expanded, so did her confidence. With support from WEV, Soraya strengthened her business strategy, refined her approach to pitching, and grew her operations—surpassing six figures in revenue and employing a small team.

*“I’m grateful to WEV for creating spaces, especially for women, regardless of age, background or stage in life. When a person feels seen and acknowledged, their ability to believe in themselves grows.”*

Rosa Isabel Ruiz founded Manos Hablan, an art business rooted in second chances. Inspired by a desire to support individuals who are incarcerated, her work creates pathways to a dignified income, providing real opportunities to stay productive, hopeful, and active. Through WEV’s Emprendimiento program, Rosa gained more than business skills. She found a supportive community that strengthened her confidence and helped her move from ideas to action. With guidance, she developed the tools to navigate a competitive market and build a sustainable business. Today, Rosa is bringing her vision to life—creating opportunity for others while building a business of her own. Just as WEV supported her, she is committed to ensuring others feel seen and capable of moving forward.



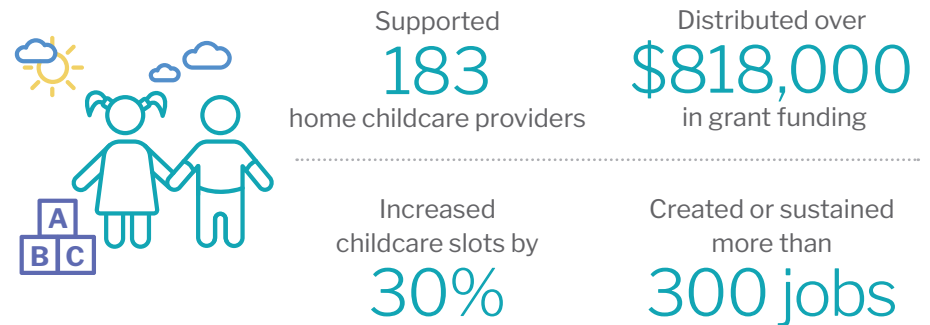
**Rosa Isabel Ruiz**  
Manos Hablan  
Emprendimiento

# Addressing Barriers to Economic Mobility

## Childcare Access

Access to affordable, reliable childcare remains one of the largest barriers to economic mobility—for families and providers alike. WEV's Business of Care program invests in at-home childcare providers, helping them grow sustainable businesses that expand access to care.

### ▶ WEV's Business of Care Impact After Five Years:



After graduating from WEV's Spanish Business of Care program, childcare owner, Alma Lopez, used her \$10,000 grant award and one-on-one advising to expand her home, increase enrollment, and move toward a larger license—serving more working families in her community.

“ A family childcare is not only a profitable business, but also one of the most impactful businesses in the community. The influence you have on future generations is invaluable, and the peace of mind parents feel knowing their most precious little humans are in caring, capable hands is something money can't buy. ”

— **Marly Dalmau**, WEV Business of Care Instructor



## Building Credit and Financial Confidence

Good credit is a gateway to financial stability, yet many individuals face barriers to building or repairing it, limiting access to housing, employment, and economic opportunity. WEV's Credit Builder class, part of its Financial Empowerment programming, provides culturally responsive, no-cost education and coaching to help participants understand, build, and take control of their credit.

### ▶ WEV's Credit Builder Impact After One-Year



100%

of participants improved or established credit for the first time

+25

points median credit score increase (average +47)

680

median credit score

64%

reached "good" credit (670+)

Growing up, Irene dreamed of building a life through her art but lacked financial confidence to turn her passion into a sustainable business. Through WEV's Credit Builder and Financial Empowerment classes, she learned to track income, manage expenses, strengthen her credit, and set achievable goals. Her progress is not only transforming her business—it is expanding what she believes is possible for her future.

“ Thanks to WEV's Credit Builder class, I was able to set clear financial goals. I was able to buy a car, and now I'm working toward buying a house. What surprises me the most is how much I've accomplished in such a short time. I've created my own brand and made more progress than I ever imagined possible. ”

— Irene Cobos, brand designer



# Accelerating Change. Investing in Women.



## League of Extraordinary Women

WEV's annual giving circle known as the League of Extraordinary Women **contributes 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.

### Investor (\$25,000+)

Junemarie Justus, Dr. Nancy O'Reilly, Kelly Mooney

### Visionary Level (\$10,000 - \$24,999)

Anonymous, Meenal & Kris Kelkar, Nanette Nevins, Carola Nicholson

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

Nancy Crouse, Lydia Hopps, Melissa Livingston, Cindy Sherman, Deborah Talmage, Lynne Tahmisian, Ruth Tidwell, Crystal Wyatt

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

Emma Bridges, Andria Martinez Cohen, Renee Courington, Devyn Duex, Eva Gans, Robbie Gluckson, Deborah Naish, Natalie Pavia, Banks Pecht, Stacy Pulice, Kate Silsbury, Karen Smith Bogart, Tana Sommer-Belin, Reese Spach, DeAnna Steiger, Andrew Winchester, Eric Zackrisson

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

Jill Agonias, Brenda Allison, Max Anderson, Kim Andrade, Katya Armistead, Barbara Aue, Bernadette Bagley, Marsha Bailey, Leslie Bains, Maria Ballesteros-Sola, Rachele Barnier, Liz Beckner, Vanessa Bechtel, Jon Bishop, Tracy Blois, Elena Brokaw, Ellen Brokaw, Natalie Browne, Linda Braunschweiger, Hannah Buschbom, Jan Campbell, Meryl Chase, Betsy Chess, Stephanie Conell, Emily Cohen, Colette Cosentino, Kathryn Courain, Erika Derry, Naomi Dewey, Simon Dixon, Dianne Duva, Jack Edelstein, Glen Farr, Karen Farr, Alessandra Fantoni, Nick Frankle, Christine Garvey, Janet Garufis, Haya Goldstein, Laurie Gross-Schaefer, Elysia Guillén, Scott Hansen, Chris Hartman, Lisa Hawkins, Julie Henley, Sandra Hirsch, Blanca Hoffmeier, Mary Ince, Carolyn Jabs, Elizabeth Jebef, Siouxsie Jennett, Zdena Jiroutova, Jonathan Johnen, Devon Johnson, Sevet Johnson, Brant Julian, Donna Julian, Tom Justus, Jean Kaplan, Mike Kauffman, Helen Keane, Elise & Bill Kearney, Keri Kettle, Ruth Kovacs, Jeffrey Lambert,

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Donna Weidl, Rosanne Welcher, Kathy Wertheim, Monica White, Heidi Whitcomb, Susan Washing, Michelle Yee, Randi Zeller

**WEV proudly recognizes the 2025 donors who gave between \$250–\$999.**

### Community Supporters (\$250-\$999)

Sally Arnold, Steven Bernston, Marilyn Clayton, Jerry Clifford, Bree Cochran, Marni Cooney, Dylan Drake, Rebecca Evans, Roberta Faeh, Jane Goodall, Rachel Greenspan-Bettina Pizzeria, Michelle Gysan, Brian Hershkowitz, Jody Holehouse, Hannah-Beth Jackson, Megan Karsh, Connie Kennelly, Galit & Scott Kursman, Lebar & Briglio, Gretchen Luchsinger, Gasper Magallanes, Ericka Malony, Meggan McCarthy, JillAnne McCarty, Perry Norton, Don Orth, Lucia Park, Ann Pieramici, Pegah Rabby, Judith Russo, Christiane Schlumberger, Jennifer Smith, Brian Stenfors, Kelly Wade, Mariaelena Welch, Marcy Wimbish

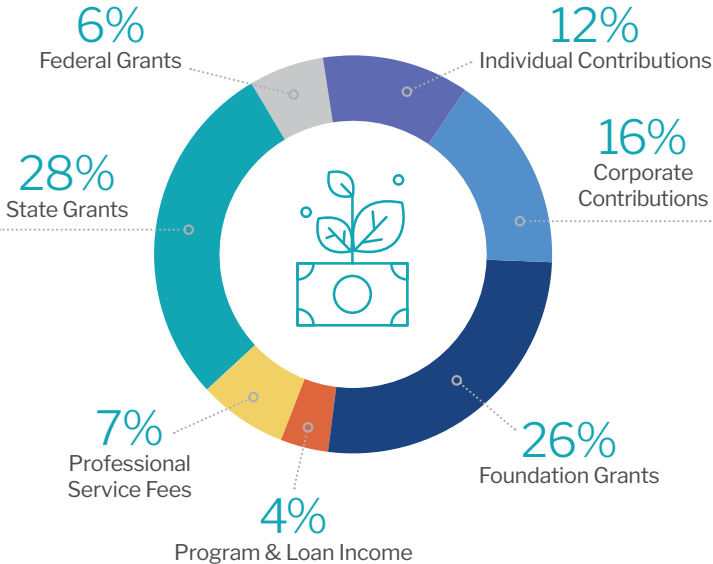
# Corporate, Foundation & Government Supporters

Corporations, foundations, and government supporters expand WEV’s capacity to deliver accessible services and deepen impact. We are grateful to the funders who championed this work in 2025.

AM Film, Amazon-Santa Barbara, Amgen Foundation, Ann Jackson Family Foundation, Anonymous, Association of Women’s Business Centers, Athens Services, Banc of California, Bank of America, Bank of Southern California, BMO Bank, Boone Graphics, CA Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development, Cal OSBA WBC Enhancement, California Bank of Commerce, California Investment & Innovation Program, California State University, Channel Islands, CAMEO Network, Chevron, City of Goleta, City National Bank, Community West Bank, Conrad Hilton Foundation, Cox Communications, Deckers, Department of Financial Protection and Innovation, E.J. Harrison & Sons, Edison International, Edwin and Jeanne Woods Family Foundation, Farr, Johnen, & Associates, Farmers & Merchants Bank, First Citizen’s Bank, Gartner, Henry W Bull Foundation, Jewish Community

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# WEV’s Sources of Funding



*\*Government grant funding continues to decline making your investment more important than ever.*

# 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, philanthropy, and sheer grit.

Brenda Allison, Bonnie Atmore, Vanessa Bechtel, Ellen Brokaw, Trudi Carey, Betsy Chess, Ann Deal, Dee Duncan, Jeanette Duncan\*, Michelle Griffoul, Renee Grubb, Myra Harrison\*, Kathy Hartley, Jacqueline Irwin, Hannah-Beth Jackson, Junemarie Justus, Gwyn Lurie, Sara Miller McCune, Kate McLean, Barbara Meister, Lynda Nahra, Mary Olson, Marianne Partridge, Iris Rideau, Kate Silsbury, Eleanor Van Cott\*, Lynda Weinman, Heidi Whitcomb, Celina Zacarias, Gail Zannon

\*indicates deceased





## Ways to Support

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



### Donate

Make a one-time gift to WEV's annual fund.



### Volunteer

Your time and talent are valuable. Email [volunteer@wevonline.org](mailto:volunteer@wevonline.org) to learn more ways to get involved.



### Join the League

Sustain your impact and join the League of Extraordinary Women annual donor giving circle.



### Sponsor

Prominent recognition opportunities are available for business and corporate funders.