

# Chapman University's Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship Provides \$500,000 to Startups with CalOSBA Innovation Grants

*The center was also awarded a four-year, \$1 million grant to support entrepreneurship*

ORANGE, CA, UNITED STATES, January 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics](#) at Chapman University's Argyros College of Business and Economics is pleased to announce it has been renewed for a second round of funding from the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA). The \$1 million grant, awarded over four years through the [Accelerate California: Inclusive Innovation Hubs Program](#), will enable the center to continue to support entrepreneurship as a path for economic empowerment in underserved communities.



The Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship is a part of the Argyros College of Business and Economics, at Chapman University

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*Dr. Cynthia West*

As Orange County's only CalOSBA Accelerate California Inclusive Innovation Hub, selected in 2023 for its entrepreneurship programs that coach, educate, and inspire the next generation of talent, Leatherby Center also received an additional \$500,000 Innovation Grant to be used as seed money for its startup clients. These investments will allow startups to complete milestones in their businesses which will help them to compete better for angel and venture capital funding in the future.

“We are incredibly grateful to CalOSBA for this funding that will play a critical role in our ability to expand innovation

and entrepreneurship in Orange County. In addition, these funds will help startups to grow their revenue and create new jobs, which will have a positive economic impact in our communities," says Dr. Cynthia West, Director of the Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics. "Underserved communities often do not have access to funding through friends and family or early-stage funding, so these dollars act as seed money that will help their startups achieve milestones — potentially leading to angel or venture capital funding down the road."

The Accelerate California: Inclusive Innovation Hub grant provides the Leatherby Center with \$250,000 per year to create more opportunities for individuals from underrepresented communities to become entrepreneurs, including: female founders, people of color, first-generation immigrants, persons with disabilities, justice impacted, and veterans. The renewal of this grant, originally awarded in 2023, will allow the center to deepen its impact through no-cost community programs that include a female founders' group, an innovation podcast, business mentorship, and more.

These programs are tailored to equip aspiring business owners with the skills and knowledge required to embark on their entrepreneurial journeys. They not only address disparities in access to funding and resources but also help empower underserved communities to pursue a path to economic independence.

Qualified startups that have participated in a Leatherby Center program are eligible to apply for



Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics Exterior



Cynthia West, Ph.D., Director of the Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship

Innovation Grant seed funding beginning in January 2025. Tier 1 (proof of concept) and Tier 2 (continuing and expanding) ventures are eligible to receive awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000. The final determination will be made at the discretion of CalOSBA. All funds will need to be dispersed by December 31, 2026.

The Leatherby Center is currently accepting rolling applications for the Innovation Grant with the first round scheduled for March 30, 2025; second round of funding will be June 30, 2025. For eligibility details and to obtain an application form, please contact [entrepreneurs@chapman.edu](mailto:entrepreneurs@chapman.edu).

#### About Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics

The Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics is a prominent center for entrepreneurial education at Chapman University's Argyros College of Business and Economics. Founded in 1995 with an endowment by Ralph W. Leatherby, the center provides hands-on experience to the next generation of talent, guiding them to launch and scale ventures which aim to solve the world's most challenging problems. In addition to serving as an incubator for new business startups and offering a diverse course catalog, the Leatherby Center complements its curriculum with public events, roundtables, guest lectures, and other programs that inspire, educate, and empower the entire community to have an entrepreneurial mindset. To learn more, please visit [www.chapman.edu/research/institutes-and-centers/leatherby-center](http://www.chapman.edu/research/institutes-and-centers/leatherby-center).

#### About Chapman University

Founded in 1861, Chapman University is a nationally ranked private university in Orange, California, about 30 miles south of Los Angeles. Chapman serves nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, with a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Students can choose from 123 areas of study within 11 colleges for a personalized education. Chapman is categorized by the Carnegie Classification as an R2 "high research activity" institution. Students at Chapman learn directly from distinguished world-class faculty including Nobel Prize winners, MacArthur fellows, published authors and Academy Award winners. The campus has produced a Rhodes Scholar, been named a top producer of Fulbright Scholars and hosts a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society. [www.chapman.edu](http://www.chapman.edu).

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