

# First California Women's Economic Summit Sells Out, Underscoring Demand to Invest in Women Entrepreneurs

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*The May 13 Sacramento convening will unite leaders advancing women's entrepreneurship, capital access, childcare, procurement, and small business growth.*

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES, May 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The first-ever [California Women's Economic Summit](#), hosted by the [California Women's Business Centers Network](#), is officially sold out, signaling strong statewide momentum behind one clear message: when California invests in women entrepreneurs, it invests in jobs, families, communities, and the future of the state.

Taking place Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at the Tsakopoulos Library Galleria in Sacramento, the Summit will convene women business owners, policymakers, funders, Women's Business Center leaders, small business advocates, and economic development partners from across California.

The sold-out response reflects growing recognition that women-owned businesses are not a niche sector — they are a driving force in job creation, family stability, community wealth, and regional growth.

"Women entrepreneurs are not waiting for California's economy to grow — they are growing it. This sold-out Summit sends a powerful message: California's economic engine must step up and prioritize investment in women entrepreneurs as a core growth strategy," said Nancy Swift, Chair of the California Women's Business Centers Network. "When women lead businesses, California's economy grows. This gathering is about making the infrastructure, leadership, and impact of women entrepreneurs more visible — and more investable."

The California Women's Business Centers Network, or CA WBC, is the only coordinated statewide economic infrastructure dedicated to women's entrepreneurship. Since the Network began in 2019, CA WBC clients have accessed \$297.5 million in business financing. In 2025 alone, the Network's clients (76% women, 52% women of color, and 38% rural-based) have accessed \$53.2 million in capital, with 65% going to women-of-color-owned businesses. The Network also returns \$79 in local economic impact for every \$1 invested.

Since 2019, the Network's 21 Women's Business Centers have served 54 counties and 88% of rural ZIP codes, providing advising, access to capital, and business growth support across rural,

urban, inland, and historically underserved communities. The CA WBC Network has trained 64,848 clients, advised 57,246 clients, generated \$637.4 million in total gross client sales and created or retained 20,148 jobs.

CA WBC childcare business owner clients have helped increase California's childcare capacity by 12,013 childcare slots and supported the launch or expansion of 1,419 childcare businesses since 2024.

The Summit's theme, "Invest in Her. Invest in California.," captures the urgency and opportunity of the moment. Women — and especially women of color — are among the fastest-growing segments of entrepreneurs, launching businesses, creating jobs, strengthening local economies, expanding childcare, and building generational wealth. Yet too many still face barriers to capital, procurement opportunities, business training, and the confidence-building support needed to grow.

"In my role, I see every day how much women entrepreneurs need — and deserve — real opportunities to access capital, procurement pathways, and business training," said Ashley Goldstein, Program Director at Women's Economic Ventures. "Those resources do more than strengthen a business plan. They build confidence, open doors, and help women entrepreneurs see themselves as the economic leaders they already are."

The Summit will feature speakers including Senate President pro Tempore Monique Limón; Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry; Darcy Totten of the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls; Twyla Garrett of IMPACT Ready; Maria Cadenas of Ventures; Elmy Bermejo of CalOSBA; Khaim Morton from the California State Treasurer's Office; and leaders from California Association for Local Economic Development, CAMEO, SBDC, U.S. Bank, Pacific Community Ventures, the Department of General Services, Valley Vision, California for the Arts, and more.

The Summit agenda will focus on access to capital and procurement, public policy and women's economic leadership, childcare and family-friendly workplaces, women in traditionally male-dominated industries, digital equity and AI, rural and regional economic development, and the creative economy.

"Women-owned businesses are not a side story in California's economy — they are central to its future," said L.A. Plax, Chair of the California Women's Economic Summit. "The response to this first Summit shows that partners across the state understand what is at stake. This is more than an event. It is a visibility moment for the women entrepreneurs, business centers, and community leaders building California's next economy."

A welcome reception will be held the evening before the Summit on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at Golden 1 Center in Sacramento — another powerful signal of what this convening represents. When you bring together advocates for women's wealth-building, women's entrepreneurship, future-shaping conversations, and energy that can move markets, communities, and policy, you

put it in an arena — a place built for big moments, strong plays, and where teamwork wins.  
About the California Women’s Business Centers Network

The California Women’s Business Centers Network is the only coordinated statewide economic infrastructure dedicated to supporting women entrepreneurs across California. Through 21 Women’s Business Centers serving 54 counties and 88% of rural ZIP codes, the Network provides business advising, training, technical assistance, capital access support, and business growth services to help women-owned and diverse small businesses launch, grow, and succeed. Since 2019, CA WBC clients have accessed \$297.5 million in business financing, started 4,241 new businesses, and created 12,429 jobs. In 2025, clients accessed \$53.2 million in capital, with 65% going to women-of-color-owned businesses.

#### About the California Women’s Economic Summit

The California Women’s Economic Summit is a statewide convening focused on advancing women’s wealth-building, economic mobility, entrepreneurship, and small business growth. Hosted by the California Women’s Business Centers Network, the Summit brings together policymakers, funders, business leaders, economic development partners, and entrepreneurs to elevate women-owned businesses as a driver of California’s economic future.

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