

2025

USC University Relations
Civic Engagement and Economic Partnerships

BRIDGES TO BUSINESS POST PROGRAM ASSESSMENT



**SPRING 2025
COHORT**

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Prepared for
**USC OFFICE OF
BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITY**

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**DR. MICHELE
TURNER**



GARY BROWN

MEET THE TEAM



**JESUS
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USC Bridges to Business program continues to play a transformative role in driving economic empowerment and advancing equity in underserved communities across Los Angeles. In Spring 2025, the program welcomed 13 small business owners, each representing diverse industries, backgrounds, and geographies, into a 10-week accelerator focused on operational growth, certification readiness, marketing strategy, and financial resilience.

This impact report summarizes the outcomes of the Spring 2025 cohort, drawing from both quantitative metrics and participant testimonials. The results demonstrate that the program significantly improved business confidence, generated economic opportunities, and strengthened professional networks. Participants left equipped to scale operations, access new capital, and formalize strategic business plans.

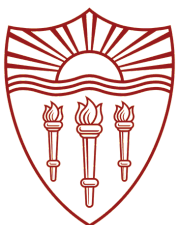
ABOUT THE PROGRAM

About the Program USC Bridges to Business is a 10-week accelerator program developed and led by the USC Civic Engagement and Economic Partnerships team. Designed to support small businesses, the program provides:

- Technical assistance from subject matter experts
- Access to funding and certification pathways
- Peer-to-peer learning and community building
- Tools for long-term sustainability



Each session incorporates expert-led instruction, tailored coaching, and tangible takeaways, culminating in a public showcase event to celebrate participant achievements.



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COHORT PROFILE

- 13 Small Business Graduates
- Primary Regions: South LA, Downtown LA, East LA
- Industries Represented: Food & Beverage, Apparel, Media, Wellness, Retail, Legal & Professional Services

Business owners in the Spring 2025 cohort ranged from early-stage to multi-location enterprises, all seeking growth strategies, capital support, and deeper USC connections.

100%

BIPOC- or Women-
Owned

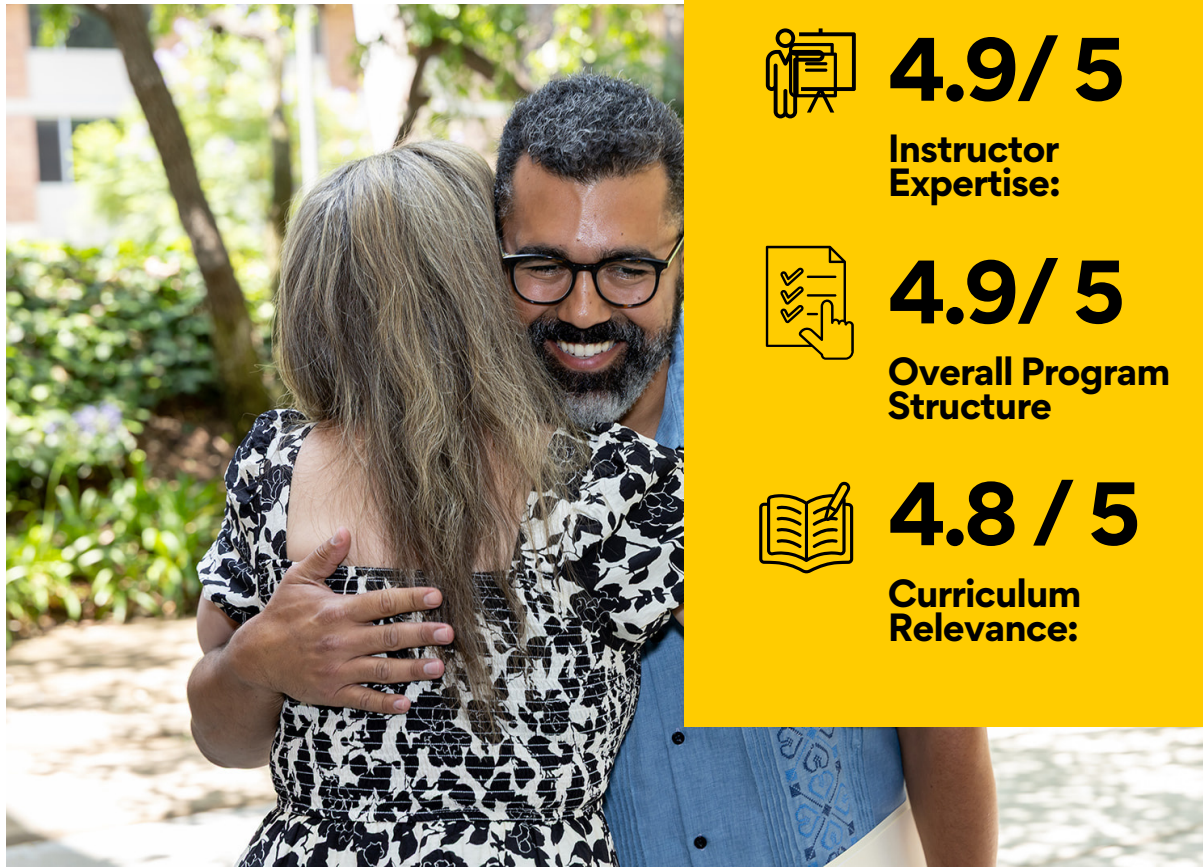


100%

Within Los Angeles
County



COHORT SATISFACTION RATINGS:



4.9/ 5

**Instructor
Expertise:**



4.9/ 5

**Overall Program
Structure**



4.8 / 5

**Curriculum
Relevance:**

These satisfaction scores reflect the strong quality of instruction, curriculum, and overall experience delivered to the cohort. Participants consistently rated their experience as exceptional across all key program areas.

QUANTITATIVE IMPACTS CONFIDENCE IN BUSINESS AREAS (POST-PROGRAM AVERAGES)

■ NETWORKING & COLLABORATION	→	4.8 / 5
■ MARKETING & BRANDING	→	4.7 / 5
■ STRATEGIC PLANNING:	→	4.6 / 5
■ SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES	→	4.6 / 5
■ OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT:	→	4.5 / 5
■ FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:	→	4.4 / 5
■ EMPLOYEE LAW BASICS	→	4.3 / 5

The data highlights the program's ability to build real confidence among entrepreneurs in the areas that matter most. These high scores show participants left the program **better prepared to lead, grow, and sustain their businesses.**

ECONOMIC INDICATORS:

- **8 businesses** formed new partnerships or collaborations
- **8 businesses** gained new clients or referrals
- **3 businesses** reported strategic growth projects in development
- **\$200,500** reported in new funding sources



KEY GROWTH METRICS

- **77%** formed strategic partnerships
- **77%** acquired new clients or referrals
- **100%** reported increased confidence in 5+ business areas
- Multiple businesses are actively **pursuing expansion, investor funding, or staff hiring**

COHORT MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



**JOHN
REID, FOUNDER
AND CEO OF
SKY**

"What is the most significant change or benefit my business has gained from participating in the program was focusing on growth and scale strategies, and learning about strategic financing resources."

* With the insights of Elevated Consumer Psychology, our studio helps companies combine positive purpose with the power of leading edge brand development.

The results are brands that outperform their competition and inspire their audiences. This is Brand Elevation.



**HAZEL ROJAS,
MASARAP
CAFE**

"The peer support in this program was inspiring. I left feeling seen, empowered, and capable of scaling my business."

* Masarap Organic Hot Sauce – Experience the perfect blend of Filipino and West African spices in our Organic Sauce, made with only the finest all-natural ingredients. Designed to bring bold flavors to every meal, our organic hot sauce is the ideal way to add heat and excitement to chicken wings, seafood, and snacks. Elevate your dishes with the unmistakable taste of premium, all-natural, organic sauce.

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

Participants shared stories of growth through mentorship, new funding pathways, and renewed purpose in their entrepreneurial journey.



**"The program helped me clarify my mission and values, and I now have a clear strategy for growth."
— Linda Nguyen, Culture Series**

**"I am forever grateful for being a part of this program, and it's exactly what we needed to help us grow and impact our community."
— Melannie McKinney, Audio Alliance"**

**"This experience gave me the confidence to apply for new opportunities and pitch my business in ways I never thought possible." —
Greg Berber, La Luz del Dia**

**"The Bridge to Business program was exactly the catalyst I needed. It helped me narrow my focus, clarify my niche, and take real action toward scaling my real estate business with purpose."
— Betty Galvan, B. Galvan Investments Inc.**

FUTURE OUTLOOK

FUTURE PLAN

Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, the cohort identified the following areas for future enhancement:

- Add hands-on technical workshops
- Include a resource bank of digital tools and funding templates
- Feature returning alumni to offer peer-led insights



ALIGNMENT

The Bridges to Business program reflects USC's enduring commitment to community engagement, place-based equity, and regional economic development:

- Access: Participants received no-cost access to USC knowledge, coaching, and networks
- Impact: The program fostered job creation, formalization of businesses, and community resilience



CONTACT US



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