

BRANDED CONTENT

JUNE 10, 2024

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

# WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2024

*The Nominees*



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# THE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS

## Thursday, June 13 | Intercontinental Los Angeles Downtown

Join us on Thursday, June 13th as we honor and celebrate the terrific women business leaders in the Los Angeles community with our awards ceremony, the 2024 Women's Leadership Awards.

With 333 nominees (appearing in the pages of this issue), there are clearly many accomplished and impactful leaders to draw inspiration from. This year, we will name honorees in the following categories:

- CEO of the Year
- Champion of Women
- Community Impact Advocate
- Emerging Woman-Owned Business Leader
- Executive of the Year
- Innovator of the Year
- Mentor of the Year
- NextGen Woman of the Year
- Woman to Watch

It's an event you won't want to miss!

### SYMPOSIUM BREAKFAST

8:00AM REGISTRATION, NETWORKING & BREAKFAST

9:00AM WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

### PANEL DISCUSSIONS

9:10AM DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S NEXTGEN LEADERS

9:50AM ADVICE TO MY 25-YEAR-OLD SELF

10:30AM WOMEN EMBRACING TECH & INNOVATION

11:10AM LEADING WITH AUTHENTICITY

### AWARDS LUNCHEON TO FOLLOW

To register, visit [labusinessjournal.com/events/wlsa2024](https://labusinessjournal.com/events/wlsa2024)



## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COLLEAGUES, Cheryl Calhoun, Kelly O'Neil, Betty Liu & Shannon Pearce

on being nominees for the Los Angeles Business Journals' 2024 WOMEN LEADERSHIP AWARDS



**Cheryl Calhoun**  
Managing Director



**Betty Liu**  
Director



**Kelly O'Neil**  
Managing Director



**Shannon Pearce**  
Senior Manager

[CBIZ.COM/LOSANGELES](https://cbiz.com/losangeles) | [MHMCPA.COM/LOSANGELES](https://mhmcpa.com/losangeles)



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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL  
**WOMEN'S**  
 LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM  
 & AWARDS 2024

*The Nominees*



**Adelara Adekoya**  
 CEO; Founder  
 Fleurs et Sel



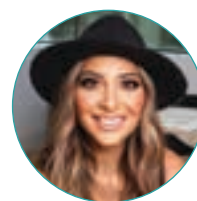
**Claudia Afshar**  
 Principal; Founder  
 Claudia Afshar Design



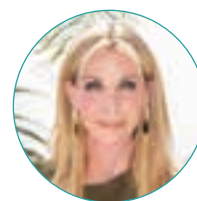
**Susie Albin-Najera**  
 Director of Leisure Travel &  
 Strategic Partnerships, US Market  
 Los Cabos Tourism Board



**Marissa Alguire**  
 Deputy Chair, Labor and Employment  
 Practice Group  
 Akerman LLP



**Natalie Alvarez**  
 Realtor  
 The Agency



**Cindy Ambuehl**  
 Executive Director, Luxury Estates  
 Christie's International Real Estate



**Belva Anakwenze**  
 Entertainment Business Manager  
 Abacus Financial Business Management



**Arielle Anderson**  
 Partner; Senior Advisor  
 Westmount Partners



**Hayley Antonian**  
 President; Co-Founder  
 Scenario Communications



**Cassy Aoyagi**  
 President; Co-Founder  
 FormLA Landscaping



**Rosa Arevalo**  
 Estimating / Outreach Manager  
 Webcor



**Rainy Austin**  
 President  
 The Agency



**Nicole Auyang**  
 Head, Business Community Banking  
 City National Bank



**Kiki Ayers**  
 CEO  
 Ayers Publicity



**Erica Balin**  
 Principal  
 Lee & Associates- LA North/Ventura



**Carol Bates**  
 Private Wealth Advisor  
 Strategic View Advisors



**Allegra Batista**  
 Manager, Communications  
 Applebee's



**Shameka Beaugard**  
 Founder  
 Youth with a Purpose



**Theresa Becerra**  
 Partner  
 Spencer Fane LLP



**Carrie Bell**  
 Director, Culver City Safe Sleep Village  
 Urban Alchemy



**Patrice Bening**  
 Wealth Advisor  
 Morton Wealth



**Chante Bernard**  
 Founder & CEO  
 Cakes By Chante



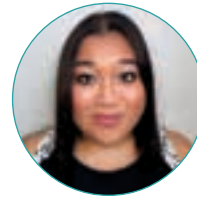
**Barbara Bernstein**  
 Wealth Management Advisor  
 Fortuna Wealth Management, Legacy  
 Strategies and Insurance Solutions



**Michele Bernstein**  
 Owner; President  
 Michi B, Inc



**Kavitha Bhatia, MD, MMM, FAAP, FACHE**  
 President; Chair  
 Prime Healthcare Foundation  
 Chief Medical Officer, Strategy  
 Prime Healthcare



**Tania Birker**  
 Booking Manager  
 VOX DJs



**Deborah Birndorf-Zeiler**  
 Partner  
 Norton Rose Fulbright



**Kara Boccella**  
 Partner  
 Certuity



**Giovanna Brasfield**  
 CEO  
 Brasfield & Associates LLC



**Charlotte Bruner**  
 Senior Vice President,  
 Los Angeles Brand Lead  
 Edelman



**Lisa Buckley**  
 Managing Director  
 VaynerMedia LA



**Cheryl Calhoun**  
 Managing Director  
 CBIZ, Inc.



**Mary Craig Calkins**  
 Partner, Insurance Recovery  
 Blank Rome LLP



**Kaitlynn Campbell**  
 Catering Sales Manager  
 Jonathan Club



**Nicole Cannon**  
 Principal  
 NCA Studio



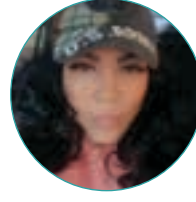
**Judy Carpenter**  
 Head, Medical Network Operations  
 Akido Labs



**Jessica Carrera**  
 Director of AmeriCorps - Seniors RSVP  
 L.A. Works



**Allison Carroll**  
 Design Director  
 Nadia Geller Designs



**Diana Ramos Santiago Carter**  
 CEO; Founder  
 Panther Trail Films Production



**Rachel Castillo**  
 Transaction Manager  
 Avison Young



**Alisha Cathirell-Tanzer**  
 Director, AmeriCorps VISTA -  
 State and National  
 L.A. Works



**Meredith Cavallaro**  
 Partner  
 Paduano & Weintraub LLP

# ENTERPRISE BANK & TRUST IS PROUD TO SPONSOR THE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS

Hosted by the Los Angeles Business Journal

## Congratulations to Maria and all the nominees

On behalf of Enterprise Bank & Trust, congratulations to all of the women recognized for your outstanding leadership in California business and beyond. We are inspired by what you have achieved and wish you continued success.

Award nominee Maria Hunter, Senior Vice President, Relationship Manager Team Lead, is a leader at Enterprise and in the community, furthering our mission to guide people to a lifetime of financial success.

**Together, there's no stopping you.**



**Maria Hunter**  
SVP, Relationship Manager  
Team Lead



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Los Angeles' privately held businesses at  
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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL  
**WOMEN'S**  
 LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM  
 & AWARDS 2024

*The Nominees*



**April Chang**  
 Design & Project Manager  
 Webcor



**Cheryl S. Chang**  
 Partner & Vice-Chair, Financial Institutions  
 Litigation and Regulatory Compliance;  
 Co-Chair, Los Angeles Office  
 Blank Rome LLP



**Cyndie M. Chang**  
 Managing Partner, Los Angeles Office  
 Duane Morris LLP



**Felicia Chang**  
 Head of Wealth Strategy  
 Westmount Partners



**Shawna Charles**  
 Media Relations Specialist  
 Charles Communications Group



**Julisa Chavez**  
 Development Manager  
 DIY Girls



**Kitty Chen**  
 Senior Managing Director,  
 Head of Retail & Business Banking  
 East West Bank



**Sandra Cho**  
 President and Founder  
 Pointwealth Capital Management



**Andrea Choe**  
 Co-Founder and CEO  
 Holoclara



**Leigh Christy**  
 Principal  
 Perkins&Will



**Anna Chung**  
 Executive Vice President & Chief Small  
 Business Administration Lending Officer  
 Hanmi Bank/ Hanmi Financial Corporation



**Nicole Clark**  
 CEO & Co-Founder  
 Trelis



**Hillary Cohen**  
 Co-Founder & CEO  
 Every Day Action



**Randi Cohen**  
 Vice President  
 Beta



**Moira Conlon**  
 Founder & CEO  
 Financial Profiles



**Katy Conroy**  
 Partner  
 Sklar Kirsh LLP



**Lauren Corugedo**  
 Head of Marketing  
 Chef Merito



**Megan Creecy-Herman**  
 President, West Region  
 Prologis



**Adrianna Cruz**  
 President  
 U-FRAME-IT GALLERY



**Jane Davidson**  
 Litigation Associate  
 Munck Wilson Mandal



**Alexa Delahooke**  
 Senior Associate  
 Cushman & Wakefield



**Rosa Delgado**  
 Senior Project Manager  
 Clayco



**Melissa Demirci**  
 Principal  
 Transtech Engineers, Inc.



**Shaina Denny**  
 Co-Founder and CEO  
 Dogdrop



**Amanda Depierro**  
 Senior Associate  
 Colliers



**Christine Deschaine**  
 Senior Vice President  
 Kennedy Wilson Brokerage



**Christine Devine**  
 News Anchor  
 KTTV Fox 11 News



**Michelle Diamond**  
 CEO  
 Elevate Diamond Strategy &  
 Diamond Executive Resumes



**Kelli Dillon**  
 Founder; Executive Director  
 Back to the Basics, Los Angeles



**Alesha Dominique**  
 Partner  
 Norton Rose Fulbright



**Erin Donovan**  
 Partner  
 Musick, Peeler, & Garrett LLP



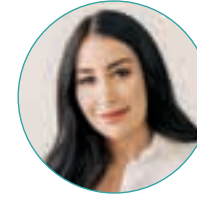
**Rosemarie Chiusano Drohan**  
 Executive Vice President, Business Development  
 Judicate West



**Ava DuVernay**  
 Founder  
 Array



**Kathryn Edgerton**  
 Member  
 Mintz



**Amber Estorga**  
 Founder  
 Fore Gals Golf



**Leslie Evans**  
 Associate Consultant  
 Turner & Townsend Heery



**Ariel Fan**  
 Founder & CEO  
 GreenWealth Energy



**Susan Fries**  
 CEO  
 Ecola Termite & Pest Control



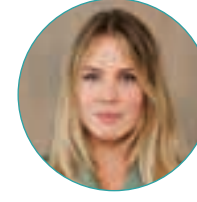
**Melissa Fulmer**  
 Regional Sales Manager  
 Wells Fargo



**Penelope Gallegos**  
 Director of Business Development  
 Executive Mental Health



**Sheenika Gandhi**  
 Chief Marketing Officer  
 Greenberg Glusker LLP



**Meredith Gee**  
 Product Design Lead  
 Akido



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Congratulations to the Women's  
Leadership Nominees!

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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL  
**WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2024**

# The Nominees



**Nadia Geller**  
*Principal and Managing Director*  
 Nadia Geller Designs



**Mitchella Gilbert**  
*Founder*  
 Oya Femtech Apparel



**Kathleen Gilmore**  
*Chair; President; Principal*  
 Clifford Swan Investment Counselors



**Tina Giorgadze**  
*Associate Principal*  
 Perkins&Will



**Marissa Goldberg**  
*CEO*  
 Doheny Eye Institute



**Kristina Goldman**  
*Realtor*  
 Equity Union Real Estate



**Susana Gomez**  
*Associate Director, Marketing and Communications*  
 DIY Girls



**Corrina Grabis**  
*Director, Client Relations*  
 RAM Construction



**Simona Grace**  
*Vice President*  
 Commission on the Status of Women, Los Angeles



**Michelle Graci**  
*Agent*  
 The Beverly Hills Estates



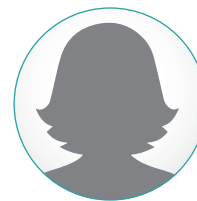
**Anneke Greco**  
*Executive Vice President*  
 Colliers



**Ashley Grizzle**  
*Portfolio Management Officer*  
 Bank of America



**Erin Hallissy**  
*Partner*  
 SCHONBUCH HALLISSY LLP



**Danielle Hari**  
*Chief of Oncology Surgery*  
 Harbor UCLA



**Lucy Hartford**  
*Vice President*  
 NAI Capital Commercial



**Sarah Hartman**  
*Partner*  
 Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP



**Michele Havens**  
*President, West Region*  
 Northern Trust



**Elva Hernandez**  
*Vice President of Accounting*  
 CIRE Equity



**Jane Hinton**  
*Partner*  
 Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP



**Gwendolyn Hogans**  
*Board Member*  
 Women of Blue and White



**Ileana Holguin**  
*Vice President*



**Cathy J. Hood**  
*President; CEO*  
 Pristine Initiative



**Lisa Hsaio**  
*Partner*  
 Musick, Peeler, & Garrett LLP



**Neela Hummel**  
*Co-CEO*  
 Abacus Wealth Partners



**Kristin Hundley**  
*Director of Operations*  
 Limousine Connections



**Carolyn Hunt**  
*Partner*  
 Barnes & Thornburg LLP



**Maria Hunter**  
*SVP, Relationship Manager Team Lead*  
 Enterprise Bank & Trust



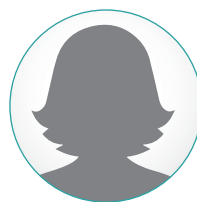
**Serena Hwang**  
*Controller*  
 Avison Young



**Shadi Jahangir**  
*Partner, Finance*  
 Blank Rome LLP



**Kat Janowicz**  
*CEO*  
 3COTECH, Inc.



**Connie Jensen**  
*Assistant Superintendent*  
 Long Beach Unified



**Mei-Lon Jimenez**  
*Co-Founder & CEO*  
 Chica Beauty



**Toni Jimenez**  
*Co-Founder & CEO*  
 Chica Beauty



**Amy Johnson**  
*VP*  
 Perennial Financial Services



**Arwen Johnson**  
*Partner*  
 King & Spalding



**Ginger Jonas**  
*Vice President, Employee Benefits*  
 USI Insurance Services



**Liz Juarez**  
*Assistant Controller*  
 Dine Brands Global



**Beth Kahn**  
*Partner*  
 Musick, Peeler, & Garrett LLP



**Rosalyn Kahn**  
*President*  
 A&R Media



**Sonia Smith Kang**  
*CEO*  
 Mixed Up Clothing

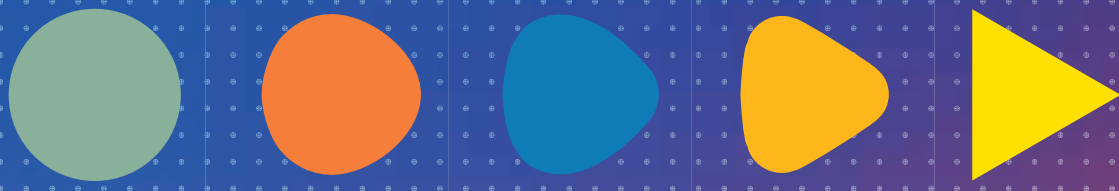


**Alice Kao**  
*Co-Founder, CEO*  
 Sender One Climbing



**Jenna Kaplan**  
*Associate Broker*  
 Aon





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*The Nominees*



**Eliza Karagezian**  
*Real Estate & Customer Experience,  
 Senior Manager*  
 Prologis



**Nurit Katz**  
*Chief Sustainability Officer*  
 UCLA



**Lisa Kaup**  
*Vice President Relationship Manager*  
 Banc of California



**Cindy Keefer**  
*CEO*  
 Fashion Tech Works LLC



**Kacy Keys**  
*Principal & CEO*  
 Praxis Development Group



**Helen Kim**  
*Partner*  
 Norton Rose Fulbright



**Julia Kim**  
*CEO*  
 Allmerits HealthCare &  
 Insurance Services, Inc.



**Dina Kimmel**  
*CEO*  
 We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym



**Smriti Kirubanandan**  
*Managing Director*  
 Accenture



**Stacey Klein**  
*Senior Community Relations Specialist*  
 Logix Federal Credit Union



**Lee Ann Kline**  
*President & Founder*  
 STEM Advantage



**Jenna Knudsen**  
*Managing Principal*  
 CO Architects



**Lisa Kolieb**  
*Partner, Real Estate, Land Use and Development*  
 Akerman LLP



**Sara Kornblatt**  
*Partner*  
 Gibbs Giden Locher Turner Senet  
 & Wittbrodt



**Linda Kornfeld**  
*Partner,  
 Co-Chair, Insurance Recovery Practice*  
 Blank Rome LLP



**Tara Krahe**  
*Environmental Engineer,  
 Section Manager, California*  
 Burns & McDonnell



**Supriya Kulkarni**  
*Sr. Project Consultant*  
 Turner & Townsend Heery



**Deborah La Franchi**  
*CEO*  
 SDS Capital Group



**Anderson Lafontant**  
*Managing Director*  
 Miracle Mile Advisors



**Marie LaMolinara**  
*Partner*  
 Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers



**Tina LaMonica**  
*Executive Vice President*  
 NAI Capital Commercial



**Diane Luby Lane**  
*Founder, CEO*  
 GetLit



**Lisa Laurent, MD**  
*Chief Medical Officer*  
 Providence Saint Joseph  
 Medical Center



**Monique Lawshe**  
*Partner*  
 GHC Housing Partners LLC



**Cheryl Lee**  
*Executive Director, Media and Analytics*  
 Intertrend Communications



**Eunice Lee**  
*Chief Operating Officer*  
 Scopely



**Jaime Lee**  
*CEO*  
 Jamison Realty Inc.



**Josie Leinart**  
*Co-lead of NIL Practice*  
 Munck Wilson Mandala



**Lisia Leon**  
*Partner*  
 Paduano & Weintraub



**Julia Leonard**  
*VP of Operations*  
 Mathews Real Estate  
 Investment Services



**Marissa Lepor**  
*Director, Head of Beauty &  
 Personal Care*  
 The Sage Group



**Barbara Levine**  
*Director*  
 Los Angeles Economic  
 Development Corporation



**Jamie Lewin**  
*Client Relations Manager*  
 Art Lewin Bespoke



**Chenxi Li**  
*Associate, Real Estate*  
 Akerman LLP



**Jennifer Lieser**  
*Partner*  
 Kaplan Marino, PC



**Rhiana Lindsey**  
*Director, Leasing Services*  
 Primestor



**Betty Liu**  
*Director*  
 CBIZ, Inc.



**Nicole Lueddeke**  
*Associate*  
 Paul Hastings LLP



**Brooke Lykins**  
*Deputy Chief Executive Officer*  
 Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA)



**Catherine MacAdam**  
*Project Manager*  
 Clune Construction



**Karen Mack**  
*CEO*  
 LA Commons



**Mahru Madjidi**  
*Shareholder*  
 Shegerian & Associates



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*The Nominees*



**Rochelle Atlas Maize**  
 Executive Director, Luxury Estates Division  
 Nourmand & Associates



**Dr. Narineh Makijan**  
 Assistant Vice President; Chair  
 Los Angeles Regional Consortium



**Leslie Margolin**  
 Head, Healthcare Networks  
 Akido Labs



**Nina Marino**  
 Partner  
 Kaplan Marino



**Sheila Marmon**  
 Founder/CEO  
 Mirror Digital



**Marianne Martin**  
 Partner  
 Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP



**Laura Mason**  
 Senior Associate  
 Kayne Anderson Growth Capital



**Maja Matarifá**  
 Chan Soon-Shiong Chair and  
 Distinguished Professor of Computer  
 Science, Neuroscience, and Pediatrics  
 University of Southern California



**Katrina Matthews**  
 Founder; Principal Agent  
 Katrina Matthews Real Estate  
 Investment Group, Inc.



**Kiesha McCann**  
 DEI & Engagement Manager  
 Kinecta Federal Credit Union



**Laura McHolm**  
 Co-Founder; Marketing Director  
 NorthStar Moving Company



**Kimberlina McKinney**  
 Senior Counsel  
 Newell Law Group



**Stacey McKinnon**  
 Chief Operating Officer;  
 Chief Marketing Officer  
 Morton Wealth



**Nella McOsker**  
 President & CEO  
 Central City Association



**Jacqueline Mejia**  
 CEO; Founder  
 My Resume Squad



**Sheri Messerlian**  
 Executive Vice President  
 NAI Capital Commercial



**Lisa Helfend Meyer**  
 Founding Partner  
 Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers



**Felicia Meyers**  
 Founding Partner  
 Meyer, Olson, Lowy & Meyers



**Christina Miller**  
 President; CEO  
 Mental Health America of Los Angeles



**Janice Miller**  
 Managing Partner  
 Miller Haga Law Group LLP



**Nancy Miret**  
 General Manager  
 Lincoln Property Company



**Kayoko Mitsumatsu**  
 Founder  
 Yoga Gives Back



**Erica Moore-Burton, Esq.**  
 Founder & President  
 Round Hill Legal Search



**Alina Moran**  
 President and CEO  
 Dignity Health - California Hospital  
 Medical Center



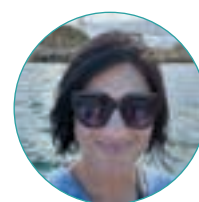
**Tania Moyron**  
 Partner; Chair, US Restructuring,  
 Insolvency and Bankruptcy Group, US  
 Region; Co-Chair, Global Restructuring,  
 Insolvency and Bankruptcy Group  
 Dentons



**Lisa Murgia**  
 Regional Sales Manager  
 Wells Fargo



**Jaime Nack**  
 President  
 Three Squares Inc.



**Ekta Naik**  
 SVP, Development  
 SOLA Impact



**Alenoosh Giragousian Namagerdi**  
 Director, Revenue Cycle Management  
 HRC Fertility



**Farzana Nayani**  
 Founder; CEO  
 Farzana Nayani,  
 Consulting & Training



**Lizbeth Nevarez**  
 Managing Director  
 GHJ



**Vicki Newnam**  
 Chief of Staff  
 DrinkPAK



**Shandreka Niblett**  
 Chief Operating Officer  
 Spectrum Commercial Real Estate, Inc.



**Lauren Nielsen**  
 Director of Client Experience  
 GCX



**Myra Nourmand**  
 Principal and Agent  
 Nourmand & Associates



**Antonia O'Hara**  
 Founder  
 Indigo by Boutin



**Kelly O'Neil**  
 Lead Managing Director  
 CBIZ, Inc.



**Rose O'Sullivan**  
 Executive Vice President  
 NAI Capital Commercial



**Connie Orlando**  
 Executive Vice President of Specials,  
 Music Programming & Music Strategy  
 BET Media Group



**Jessica Orlando**  
 Associate Principal, Higher Education  
 Practice Leader, Los Angeles  
 Perkins&Will



**Carissa Ortega**  
 Co-Owner  
 CO Creative Cartel, LLC



**Joslyn Osborn**  
 Co-Managing Partner  
 Vaco Los Angeles



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ACS is looking to mobilize local partners to share the study with their networks. If you are interested in learning more about how you or your organization can support VOICES, please reach out to [rosa.navas@cancer.org](mailto:rosa.navas@cancer.org) for additional information.



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OF BLACK WOMEN

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[voices.cancer.org](https://voices.cancer.org)

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 LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM  
 & AWARDS 2024

*The Nominees*



**Crystal Osejo**  
 Senior Vice President, Production  
 Services Operations  
 Hudson Pacific Properties



**Anoosheh Oskouian**  
 President and CEO  
 Ship & Shore Environmental, Inc.



**Candice Paik**  
 CEO  
 Tallywell



**Paulette Pantoja**  
 CEO; Founder  
 Blu Digital Group



**Alison Pappas**  
 Partner  
 Crosbie Gliner Schiffman Southard &  
 Swanson LLP (CGS3)



**Tami Pardee**  
 Founder; CEO  
 Pardee Properties



**Grace Park**  
 CEO  
 Nuleep



**Soo Park**  
 Partner  
 Barnes & Thornburg LLP



**Prital Patel**  
 Vice President; Design Director  
 PBS Engineers, Inc



**Kanan Patel-Coleman**  
 Environmental Project Manager  
 Burns & McDonnell



**Shannon Pearce**  
 Senior Manager  
 CBIZ, Inc.



**Emily Pincin**  
 Partner  
 Kent | Pincin, LLP



**Diedra Porché**  
 National Head, Community and  
 Business Development  
 JPMorgan Chase



**Heather Quinn**  
 Wealth Management Advisor  
 Fortuna Wealth Management, Legacy  
 Strategies and Insurance Solutions



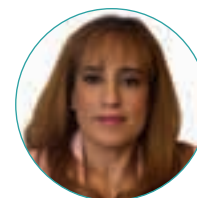
**Brenda Radmacher**  
 Partner, Litigation, Construction  
 Akerman LLP



**Caroline Raffi**  
 Vice President, Enterprise  
 Ducere Global Business School



**Geovanny Ragsdale**  
 Chief Executive Officer  
 Boys & Girls Club of the West Valley



**Elisa Ramos**  
 Regional Director of Operations  
 HRC Fertility



**Judy Ranan**  
 Executive Director  
 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation



**Bee Rarewala**  
 Chief Strategy Officer  
 AC Martin



**Kimberly Ravenell**  
 Partner  
 Withum



**Lauren Ravitz**  
 Luxury Director  
 Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices  
 California Properties



**Angela Reddock-Wright**  
 Mediator, Employment & Title IX Law  
 Signature Resolution / Reddock Law



**Lisa Reddy**  
 Vice President, Leasing Officer  
 Prologis



**Sunitha Reddy, MBA, MPH, FACHE**  
 Chief Revenue;  
 Vice President of Operations  
 Prime Healthcare



**Tracy Redmond**  
 Director of Product Marketing &  
 Management  
 IHOP



**Kristen Richer**  
 Partner  
 Barnes & Thornburg LLP



**Heather Rim**  
 Chief Marketing Officer  
 Optiv



**Sarah Roberts**  
 President  
 Ballantines PR



**Ellen Robbins**  
 Partner, Litigation  
 Akerman LLP



**Elisa Rodriguez**  
 Social Media Coordinator  
 LA. Works



**Yansy Rolén**  
 Vice President  
 Avison Young



**Ally Rooney**  
 Associate Broker  
 Aon



**Linda Rosenberg**  
 Strategic Business Advisor  
 California Manufacturing Technology  
 Consulting (CMT)



**Erin Ross**  
 CEO  
 Girls Inc. of Los Angeles



**Patty Ross**  
 CEO  
 Golden State Marketing LLC



**Miri Rossitto**  
 Founder; CEO  
 Cowe Communications



**Jacqueline Roth**  
 President, Employee Benefits  
 IMA Financial Group



**Lori Roth**  
 Global Managing Partner  
 Prager Metis



**Schenae Rourke**  
 President; CEO  
 Redwood Resources



**Danielle Roy**  
 Founder  
 Morale Matters



**Amy Russell**  
 Partner  
 Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP



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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL  
**WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2024**

*The Nominees*



**Lara Saab**  
 Managing Director, CBRE Property Management, Greater Los Angeles  
 CBRE



**Maria Salinas**  
 President; CEO  
 Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce



**Diana Samuels**  
 Director of Operations  
 HRI



**Kristina Sawyer**  
 Vice President, Lending  
 Arixa Capital



**Jen Saxton**  
 Founder & CEO  
 Tot Squad



**Kathleen Schaffer**  
 Founder & Creative Director  
 Schaffer LA



**Carol Schary**  
 President; Owner  
 Nathan Kimmel Company, LLC



**Katelyn Schmidt**  
 Audit Manager  
 gishSEIDEN LLP



**Lara Schmoisman**  
 CEO; Founder  
 The Darl



**Sherry Sedighi**  
 Partner  
 Baker Tilly



**Carmel Sella**  
 Senior Vice President; Senior Director,  
 Government Relations  
 Wells Fargo



**Anabel Serrano**  
 Risk Management Specialist  
 Shawmut Design and Construction



**Erin Severson**  
 Executive Vice President, Los Angeles  
 Health Lead  
 Edelman



**Laurie Sewell**  
 CEO  
 Servicon



**Felecia Fisher Shamu**  
 CEO; Co-Founder  
 Vitality Furniture



**Shaama Sharada**  
 Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering  
 and Materials Science and Chemistry  
 University of Southern California



**Sharon Sharp**  
 Director, Strategic Operations,  
 Implementation and Training  
 Dine Brands Global



**Kathi Sharpe-Ross**  
 CEO; President  
 The Sharpe Alliance



**Shawn Sheffield, MBA, MHSA**  
 Chief Strategy Officer  
 Keck Medicine of USC



**Gillian Sheldon**  
 Founder; CEO  
 Sheldon Strategy and Consulting



**Ivelisse Simon**  
 Managing Partner  
 Avante Capital Partners



**Danone Simpson**  
 Founder, CEO  
 Montage Insurance Solutions



**Martine Singer**  
 President & CEO  
 Children's Institute



**Eimon Smith**  
 Environmental Project Manager  
 Burns & McDonnell



**Jacqueline Smith**  
 Associate Project Manager  
 Turner & Townsend Heery



**Dr. Stacy Smith**  
 Founder; Director  
 USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative



**Wendy Smith**  
 Psychotherapist; Retired Clinical Professor  
 of Social Work; Associate Dean of  
 Curriculum Development & Assessment  
 USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
 School of Social Work



**Johnese Spisso**  
 CEO, UCLA Hospital System  
 UCLA Health



**Jessica Sprague**  
 Tax Director  
 gishSEIDEN LLP



**Lexi St. John**  
 Executive Vice President, QYOU +  
 General Manager, QYOU Studios  
 QYOU Media



**Tema Staig**  
 Executive Director  
 Women In Media



**Daisy Stall**  
 EVP, Head of Entertainment Finance  
 California Bank & Trust



**Paula Stamp**  
 CEO; Principal  
 Geaux Consulting Group



**Emily Steenwyk**  
 Director  
 ForensisGroup



**Michele Stein**  
 Chief Operating Officer  
 NAI Capital Commercial



**Marty Stevens-Heebner**  
 Founder; Owner  
 Clear Home Solutions



**Rebecca Strom**  
 Managing Director  
 Hines



**Stacey Sullivan**  
 Partner  
 Hill, Farrer & Burrill LLP



**Aisha Summers-Burke**  
 Executive Vice President;  
 General Manager, BET Studios  
 BET Media Group



**Paula Sweis**  
 Founder and Principal  
 SILVERWEISS International



**Iliana Tavera**  
 CEO  
 Haven Hills



**Julie D. Taylor**  
 Principal  
 Taylor & Company





## JACQUELINE ROTH

President of Employee Benefits

Congratulations to **Jacqueline Roth**, on her nomination for the Los Angeles Business Journal's Women's Leadership Award in the 'Women to Watch' category.



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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL  
**WOMEN'S**  
 LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM  
 & AWARDS 2024

# The Nominees



**Marie Taylor**  
 Executive Vice President  
 NAI Capital Commercial



**Dr. Sara Terheggen**  
 Founder & CEO  
 The NBD Group, Inc.



**Vanessa Terzian**  
 Partner  
 Lagerlof, LLP



**Olivia Theroux**  
 Chief Financial Officer, Global Studios  
 Hudson Pacific Properties



**Julie Ting**  
 Vice President, Counsel  
 Herbalife



**Camelia Tourje**  
 Co-Founder  
 Breezeway Air Duct Cleaning



**Linda Tulchin**  
 Founder & President  
 The Promotions Dept.



**Michell Tutor**  
 Sales Manager  
 CBRE



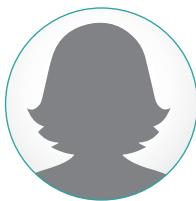
**Julie Uhrman**  
 Co-Founder & President  
 Angel City Football Club



**Amber Vaatete**  
 Director, Social Media  
 Elev8 New Media



**Ana Valdez**  
 President & CEO  
 The Latino Donor Collaborative



**Suzette Valladares**  
 Executive Director  
 Little Steps of Faith



**Estefany Varela**  
 Project Coordinator  
 Turner & Townsend Heery



**Susan Vargas**  
 Partner  
 King & Spalding



**Catherine A. Veeneman**  
 Partner  
 Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP



**Natalia Velasquez**  
 Senior Project Manager  
 Turner & Townsend Heery



**Carlota Venegas**  
 Investment Counselor  
 Clifford Swan Investment Counselors



**Emily Villalba**  
 Software Engineer  
 Sony Pictures Entertainment



**Lucy Villanueva**  
 Vice President  
 Clayco



**Alexandra Von Tiergarten**  
 District Director  
 Robert Half



**Barbara Voss**  
 Deputy City Manager  
 City of El Segundo



**Smita Wadhawan**  
 Chief Marketing Officer  
 SimplePractice



**Diane Wagner**  
 Senior Vice President; Project and  
 Information Technology Manager  
 Republic Business Credit



**Brooke Walbuck**  
 Sr. Director, Business Development  
 Webcor



**Jenifer Wallis**  
 Partner; Chair, Entertainment Practice  
 Munck Wilson Mandala, LLP



**Panney Wei**  
 Chief Empowerment Officer  
 See the Way Consulting



**Christine Weil**  
 Director of Development  
 The Wallis Annenberg Center for the  
 Performing Arts



**Angie Wells**  
 Makeup Department Head;  
 Singer / Songwriter  
 SayWhyNot, Inc



**Nicolle Wilkinson**  
 Project Management Director  
 Turner & Townsend Heery



**Lynn Williams**  
 Vice Chairman  
 CBRE



**Rayni Williams**  
 CEO & Founder  
 The Beverly Hills Estates



**Amanda Wolin**  
 Partner  
 Cox, Castle & Nicholson



**Lloyd Wong**  
 Principal, Investment Counselor  
 Clifford Swan Investment Counselors



**Anita Wu**  
 Managing Director  
 GHJ



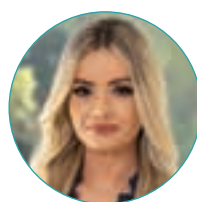
**Danielle Yamane**  
 Lead Staff Information Security Engineer  
 The Trade Desk



**Emily Yukich**  
 Partner  
 Fox Rothschild



**Sally Zesut**  
 Vice President  
 Avison Young



**Rosie Zilifyan**  
 Trial Attorney  
 Shegerian & Associates



**Katie Zinn**  
 Senior Vice President, Los Angeles Group  
 Strategy Director  
 Edelman

nazarian.csun.edu

## Determination in Action

**Maria Sim, '18**  
**Accounting and Business Honors**

Maria Sim was inspired by the wisdom and words from Nazarian College educators and advisers who introduced to her the idea of social entrepreneurship. Maria, a working mother from Guatemala, had a modest notion hatched inside a conference room at Bookstein Hall, developed it, and later introduced it at the college's Bull Ring and Fast Pitch venture competitions. That notion became "Prospoly," now a rising consulting agency that is a model for inclusivity. Prospoly connects immigrant small business owners and students from low-income areas with development opportunities in the business and entrepreneurship sectors. The Nazarian College business honors and accounting graduate found opportunity at CSUN, and through vision, persistence, and fearlessness, created a business, but also opportunity for the underserved.

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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

## WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2024

# Celebrating Women Leaders at Wells Fargo

By ALICE JUAREZ

At Wells Fargo, we have committed to supporting women as part of overall efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of business and at all levels. We stand by our commitments to champion diversity and inclusion by creating environments where people are empowered to challenge thinking and deliver diverse ideas, build relationships with individuals who are different from them, and respect differences.

As Los Angeles Region Executive, I'd like to shine light on a couple of Los Angeles women leaders who are not only inspiring, but are blazing trails for other women in finance, while helping our customers reach their financial dreams.

### STEPHANIE BUCKLEY WIM Head of Trust Philanthropic Services

Stephanie Buckley serves as the Head of Trust Philanthropic Services within the Wealth & Investment Management (WIM) division at Wells Fargo Bank. She leads a national team of specialized philanthropic advisors who help charitable individuals and families work toward their unique philanthropic goals. Prior to joining Wells Fargo, Stephanie worked at Pepperdine University for over 10 years as an associate vice chancellor. There she worked with current and prospective donors to structure gifts in the most tax efficient manner, including identifying and creating estate and financial planning tools specific to each donor's needs. Stephanie is a member of the State Bar of California (not currently practicing), on the editorial board for Planned Giving Today, a trustee for Heifer International Foundation, and a past president for the Southern California Council of Charitable Gift Planners. She serves on the faculty of the American Institute for Philanthropic Studies and formerly taught at UCLA Extension.

### PATTY JUAREZ Head of Hispanic/Latino Affairs

Patty serves as the head of Hispanic/Latino affairs. She is responsible for building a Hispanic/Latino external engagement portfolio focused on national cultural engagement, executive recruitment, business development, and stakeholder relations. She partners with Diverse Segments Representation & Inclusion, External Engagement, and Government Relations to curate national and local stakeholder activities to amplify Wells Fargo's DE&I commitment. She has a long history of leadership in the Latino community. Serving as former chairwoman and current board development chair of the Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, she is on the board of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and on the advisory board of the Latino Donor Collaborative, and on the board of Governors at Chapman University. Patty is also involved in diversity and entrepreneurship initiatives at University of California at Berkeley, Stanford, and Harvard Universities. Externally, she often speaks about topics such as Diversity and Inclusion, diverse segments, access to capital, multi-cultural marketing, and financial literacy. Internally, Patty is immediate past president of the Hispanic & Latino Connection Employee Resource Network, one of the largest at Wells Fargo.



BUCKLEY



JUAREZ



NIEWENHUIS

### ALLISON NIEWENHUIS District Manager

Allison Niewenhuis is the Wells Fargo Consumer Bank district manager for the South Pacific District in the Los Angeles region where she oversees 13 branches and 114 employees in the communities of South Central Los Angeles, Huntington Park, Bell, South Gate, Manhattan Beach, and Hermosa Beach.

Before this role, she served as a Branch Manager for 15 years. Niewenhuis is active in her community volunteering at numerous nonprofit organizations including the LA Food Bank and Habitat for Humanity.

### CARMEL SELLA Local Government Relations Senior Director

Carmel Sella is a Local Government Relations Senior Director based in Los Angeles and is responsible for legislative and policy issues in Los Angeles and Southern California. Carmel previously was a senior member of Wells Fargo's CRA Risk Management group and began her career at Wells Fargo in Community Relations. Carmel co-chaired the Community Relations Diversity and Inclusion Council and served on the council for eight years.

Prior to joining Wells Fargo, Carmel served as Deputy Mayor and legal counsel to Los Angeles Mayor James K. Hahn. In this role she led key strategies for the mayor, including the development of the City of LA's \$100 million Affordable Housing Trust Fund. She previously served as a Special Assistant City Attorney in the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office as part of the City Attorney's Executive Staff and also served as an Assistant Chief Deputy to a Los Angeles Councilmember.

Before her work in local government, Carmel was an attorney in the Los Angeles offices of two national law firms. While in private practice, Carmel served as Co-President of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Bar Association.

Carmel is a very active member of the Los Angeles community and has served on the Boards of Directors of numerous leading Los Angeles non-profit organizations. She currently serves as the Chair of the Finance Committee of the LA Parks Foundation and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Business Council and Central City Association. She previously served on the Board of the LA LGBT Center, LA Family Housing



SELLA



YIM-SULLIVAN

**'We stand by our commitments to champion diversity and inclusion by creating environments where people are empowered to challenge thinking and deliver diverse ideas, build relationships with individuals who are different from them, and respect differences.'**

and A Community of Friends. She has been appointed to serve in several City of LA Commissions including the Industrial Development Authority, the Workforce Investment Board and the Los Angeles Unified School District Compensation Review Committee. Carmel also volunteers with Heart of Los Angeles (HoLA) where she assists high school seniors from under-served communities with their college applications.

### ANGELA YIM-SULLIVAN Commercial Banking Managing Director

Angela Yim-Sullivan serves as managing director and Los Angeles Metro market executive for Wells Fargo Commercial Banking. With over 20 years of experience in financial services, Angela leads a team of banking

professionals across offices in downtown Los Angeles, Pasadena and West Covina, who help deliver tailored financial solutions to business clients with annual sales ranging from \$25 million to \$2 billion. Yim-Sullivan's commitment extends to clients from a wide range of industries as she coaches her team to provide thoughtful financial solutions aligned with clients' objectives and goals. Yim-Sullivan serves on the boards of the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation and the Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission, and she is an active mentor for her Wells Fargo colleagues.

Alice Juarez is Los Angeles region executive for Wells Fargo. To learn more about women in leadership at Wells Fargo, visit [stories.wf.com/women](https://stories.wf.com/women).

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2024

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DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S NEXTGEN LEADERS | 9:10AM



**ELAINE HAGAN**  
Associate Dean, Entrepreneurial;  
Executive Director, Price Center for  
Entrepreneurship & Innovation  
UCLA Anderson School of Management  
MODERATOR



**SHAMEKA BEAUGARD, MSW**  
CEO & Founder  
Youth With A Purpose



**MAYOR LULA DAVIS-HOLMES**  
Mayor of Carson  
City of Carson



**GEOVANNY RAGSDALE MIB, CFRE**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Boys & Girls Club of the  
West Valley

ADVICE TO MY 25-YEAR-OLD SELF | 9:50AM



**MOLLY ANN WOODS**  
Chief Development Officer  
Development & Communications  
Doheney Eye Center  
MODERATOR



**KAREN (DEE DEE) HINES**  
West Territory Vice President  
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
- Greater Los Angeles Region



**ALICE C. JUAREZ**  
Regional Branch Network  
Executive, Los Angeles Region  
Wells Fargo Bank



**JANIE MARQUEZ**  
SVP, Relationship Manager  
Enterprise Bank & Trust



**SHANNON PEARCE**  
Senior Manager  
CBIZ MHM

WOMEN EMBRACING TECH & INNOVATION | 10:30AM



**CHRISTINE DEVINE**  
News Anchor  
KTTV Fox 11 News  
MODERATOR



**CINDY I. KEEFER**  
CEO  
Fashion TechWorks



**DENISE LEDUC FROEMMING, CPA, CAE**  
President & CEO  
California Society of CPAs



**HEATHER RIM**  
Chief Marketing Officer  
Optiv



**MOIRA SHOURIE**  
Executive Director  
Zócalo Public Square,  
a unit of ASU Media Enterprise



**EMILY VILLALBA**  
Software Engineer  
Sony Pictures Entertainment

LEADING WITH AUTHENTICITY | 11:10AM



**KRISTINA M. MARTEL**  
Strategic Director, CGH Division  
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion  
American Cancer Society  
MODERATOR



**YESENIA GALLEGOS**  
Co-Office Manager; Partner,  
Southern California Offices;  
Employment Litigator/Counselor  
McDermott Will & Emery LLP



**JACQUELINE ROTH**  
President,  
Employee Benefits  
IMA Financial Group



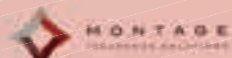
**WENDY SCHIFFER**  
Senior Director,  
Strategic Planning  
L.A. Care Health Plan



**DANONE SIMPSON**  
President & CEO  
Montage Insurance Solutions

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# How to Enhance Your Company's Curb Appeal: What Buyers Look For

**B**efore thinking of putting your business up for sale and finding a buyer, it's important to understand what buyers look for when evaluating a company. There are ways to help increase the attractiveness of your business before the actual sale process begins.

Some important elements that a buyer is looking at when they're looking to make acquisitions are things like:

Is the company in a particular niche or a segment of the market that's differentiated?

Do they have a value proposition that is meaningful to their customers and drives premium margins, recurring revenue, recurring business and revenue visibility?

Does the company have a strong management team, one that has successfully grown the business and is still young, hungry and eager to continue growing the business?

Those dynamics can really make a business more attractive to a buyer. Melina Audinelle, managing director, Fifth Third Securities, shares insights:

## Q: What are some of the performance indicators buyers are looking for?

**AUDINELLE:** It is not uncommon for buyers to ask targets how they performed in prior economic cycles, be that a recession, a pandemic.

How that company performed in that environment is important in their diligence because it will help them risk adjust the return for the future if they believe that a recession is going to be on the horizon during that investment period.

## Q: What are the different goals strategic buyers have compared with a financial buyer like private equity firms?

**AUDINELLE:** They're really looking about operating businesses that can supercharge both the core business growth and then the growth of that acquired target. Financial buyers are a little bit different. For the most part, they are looking for a platform to invest in and they're not looking to run a business. So they're looking for a business that has a management team that has historically shown the ability to grow the business and can continue to grow it either organically or through acquisitions.

## Q: What steps can an owner take to enhance the curb appeal of their company?

**AUDINELLE:** Some of those things are very basic.

- Make sure you have a strong management team, a team that can facilitate the future growth of your business.



- Make sure that you have good financial reporting -- being able to track the key performance indicators of your business.

- Are you on track to meet your goals or are there areas that you can improve within your business? Also, thinking about the customer.

The decision to sell a business is a big one, and the work involved is even bigger. So it cannot be underestimated the amount of resources it'll take to sell your business.

One key takeaway that we would provide to business owners is establish a team early on. And that team should include external advisors, both on the legal side, tax and accounting, and advisory on the sell side. Those teams can help you expand your pool of resources available to you, to effectively run a sale process while allowing you and your management team to spend as much time as possible running your business. There's nothing that can derail a sales process more quickly than the business going sideways because you and your team have been distracted. So really it's important to establish a pool of advisors that can help you.

## Q: What are some other pre-sale considerations that the right advisor can help with?

**One key takeaway that we would provide to business owners is establish a team early on. And that team should include external advisors, both on the legal side, tax and accounting, and advisory on the sell side. Those teams can help you expand your pool of resources available to you, to effectively run a sale process while allowing you and your management team to spend as much time as possible running your business.**

**AUDINELLE:** Estate planning is another very important consideration when contemplating a sale. And another important reason to plan ahead years in advance. Estate planning and tax strategies is not something that you can do overnight, and it's really important as part of a sale process to think about not just the sale price, but also the proceeds out of a transaction. The IRS can take a big chunk of that if you don't plan ahead well enough. And so it's important to involve your wealth advisors, your tax advisors to think in advance of a sale. What can be done to minimize the tax burden and maximize proceeds both to yourself and to

your broader estate?

By understanding these important buyers' considerations, company owners can take action now to help increase the attractiveness of their firms before the actual sale process begins.



For more information on how to prepare your business for a sale, contact Elsa Burton, Los Angeles Regional Manager at [Elsa.Burton@53.com](mailto:Elsa.Burton@53.com), (818) 259-3108, or visit [53.com/Commercial](https://53.com/Commercial).

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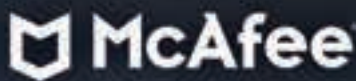


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# Advice for the Next Generation: Embracing the Value of Professional Mentorship

By **BETTY LIU**

**A**s young professionals gear up to begin their careers, I hope to see them greeted by seasoned professionals ready to provide support and guidance while they pursue their dreams.

Reflecting on my decades-long journey as an accountant, I can identify three universal pieces of advice that have helped me reach where I am today. By following my heart, adopting a growth mindset and seeking out mentorship, I've grown tremendously — personally and professionally — and I wish the same for you!

## **FOLLOW YOUR HEART**

When I began my professional career as an accountant more than 20 years ago, I knew one thing for certain: Accounting didn't feel like work to me. Even though I knew how much hard work I had put into completing my bachelor's degree, master's degree and passing the CPA exam, my passion for the accounting field carried me through those challenging milestones.

While I did not know what the future

would hold for me, or what the rest of my career would look like, I followed my heart and interests and pursued a field of work I was passionate about. For young people just beginning to solidify their career paths, I say this: Your career will become a large part of your life. Choose something that brings you joy, follow your heart and go from there!

## **APPROACH DIFFICULT TIMES WITH A GROWTH MINDSET — AND MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF**

One of the most difficult hurdles of my career came when I was balancing raising my two sons with working full time. This was a challenging time for me, and something I (and a lot of moms) did not do well enough was taking time to prioritize my physical and mental health. In the past, it was a matter of pride not to take time off from work and miss moments with your family as a result, and I think this is one thing that younger generations are getting right and embracing. After all, we are humans, not robots!

By setting aside time for myself to relax and recharge, I've found that I can be a better, more present mother and a better, more

focused accountant. One way that I practice self care is by taking vacation time after tax season ends in April and October each year! I would urge young professionals, especially ones with young families, to take time off and be present with your loved ones — even if you don't have anything extravagant planned.

Through the years, I learned to embrace these hurdles and reframe how I thought about them. Approaching challenging times — whatever those may look like for you — as an opportunity for personal growth, and learning made it easier for me to enjoy the good moments and feel confident asking my support network for help.

## **FEEL EMPOWERED TO SEEK OUT MENTORSHIPS**

I am where I am today because a mentor saw my potential and allowed me to try. The way I see it, mentorship is all about empowering others and showing empathy. I aim to provide technical advice and emotional support to help my mentees reach their full potential while exploring their talents and pursuing their dreams with confidence.

Because of traditional gender roles, par-

ticularly as it relates to family, it's easy for women to doubt themselves and question if they're in the right place or career path. This can be especially true when you don't have a proper support system, or your loved ones don't understand the dynamics and pressures of your profession.

Even though I am passionate about mentorship, I haven't always operated under a formal mentorship program. Mentors and mentorship opportunities are everywhere if you look for them.

My biggest advice is that young professionals should feel empowered to ask for the support they need. Don't hesitate to seek guidance from someone you admire, even if it's outside of a formal program!

*Betty Liu is tax director at CBIZ. She specializes in tax and business consulting services. Her primary areas of client service are tax compliance, tax planning, business consulting and client representation before IRS and state tax authorities in audit matters.*

*Learn more at [cbiz.com](http://cbiz.com).*



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McDermott is proud to sponsor the Los Angeles Business Journal Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards, along with LABJ's efforts to inspire, educate and recognize the outstanding achievements of women who make a difference in Los Angeles. We share your passion for driving change and are honored to be a part of your great work.

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# LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Judges are professors at University of Missouri School of Journalism.

# American Cancer Society Launches Largest US Population Study of Black Women

With a goal of enrolling over 100,000 Black women, the groundbreaking 'VOICES of Black Women' study will focus on lived experiences to improve health outcomes for the next generation

By ROSA NAVAS

At the American Cancer Society, equity in cancer care for all is at the heart of our mission. We prioritize work that helps ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. It's with this vision in mind we're excited to launch a new groundbreaking population cohort study – VOICES of Black Women – designed to help better understand the multi-level drivers of incidence, mortality, and resilience of cancer and other health conditions among Black women in the United States, so we can better understand how to collectively address them. This study will be the largest cohort study of cancer risk and outcomes among Black women in the United

States. The study launched with a pilot in fall 2023 and officially kicked off nationwide on May 6, 2024, with activations scheduled in four waves throughout this summer.

At ACS we fight every cancer, and for every life. We are uniquely positioned to use our 110 years of experience and leading position to help answer many unanswered questions with this new study, even beyond cancer. For generations, ACS has conducted some of the world's largest and most impactful population cohort studies to better understand how cancer develops in a population, identify cancer risk factors, and learn how to improve both survivorship and outcomes. ACS population studies have made some of the most groundbreaking discoveries in cancer science: Linking cigarette smoking to lung cancer, linking obesity to risk of early death, and linking regular aspirin use to lower risk of colorectal cancer, among many others.

With VOICES, we have an exciting opportunity to partner with communities of Black women across the nation to listen to them in meaningful ways, to lift up their stories, and ultimately better understand how their unique experiences can help us shape a path toward eliminating barriers, to ensure everyone has the



same opportunity to be healthy and cancer-free.

With a goal to recruit 100,000 Black women nationwide, 4,097 women in California alone, this study will be transformative in helping us learn more about why Black women have some of the highest death rates and shortest survival of any racial or ethnic group in the US for most cancers. Recruitment for the study will focus on 20 target states and the District of Columbia.

Recruitment is open to Black women ages 25 to 55 who live in these geographic areas and have not been diagnosed with cancer (except basal or squamous skin cancer). These states represent where more than 90 percent of Black women in the US live, according to the US Census. This recruitment model is designed to help enroll women of diverse backgrounds.

To be eligible to enroll in the VOICES of Black Women study, you must be a Black individual who:

- Is biologically female and/or self-identifies as a woman
- Lives in one of our study enrollment states or the District of Columbia
- Has no cancer history (except basal or squamous skin cancer)
- Is between the ages of 25 and 55

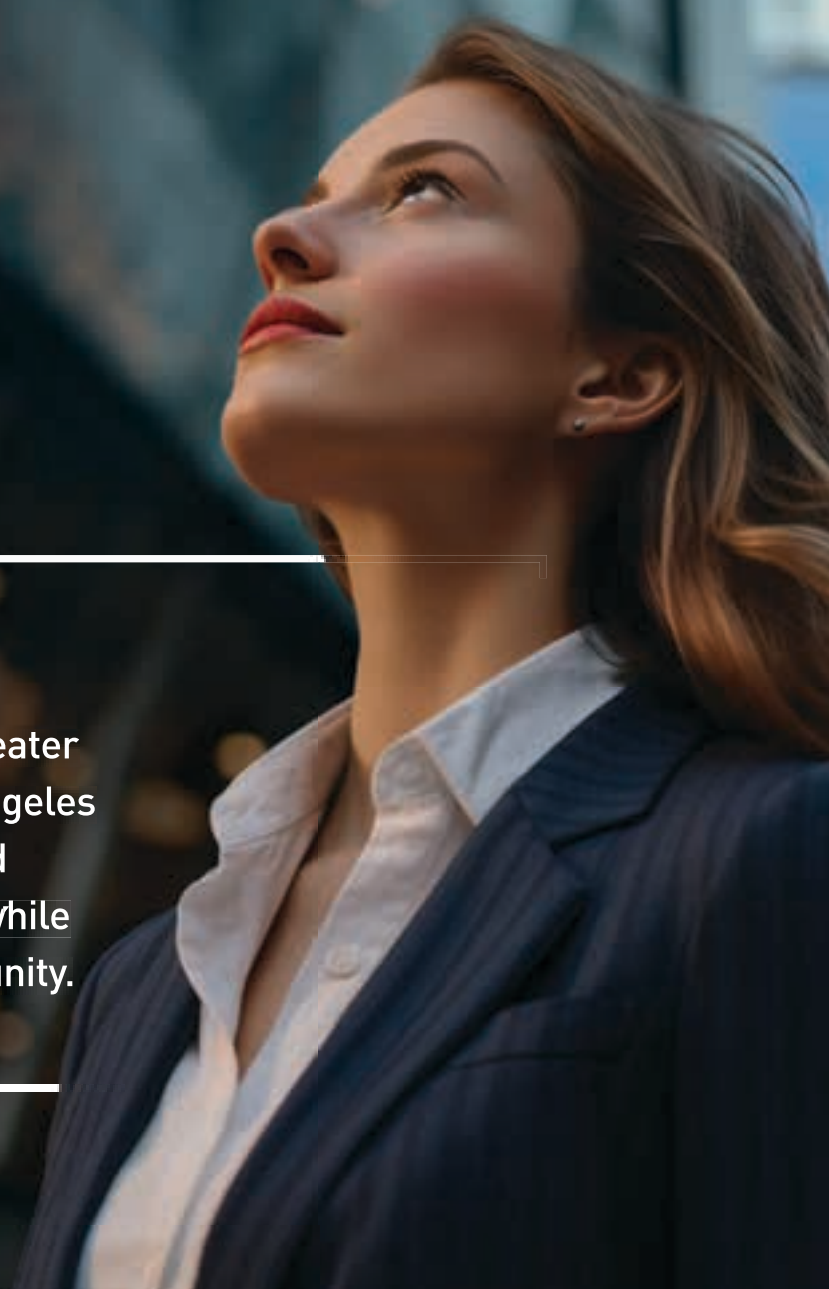
Rosa Navas is regional marketing director at the American Cancer Society. For more information about the VOICES of Black Women study and how to participate, please visit [voices.cancer.org](https://voices.cancer.org). For information on how your organization can help spread the word about this new study with your employees and networks please reach out to [rosa.navas@cancer.org](mailto:rosa.navas@cancer.org). Virtual, social media and printed marketing materials are available at no-cost.

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## inspiring growth

A good mentor serves as a source of inspiration and empowerment for others, encouraging them to reach greater heights every day. Withum is proud to support the Los Angeles Business Journal's Women's Leadership Symposium and Awards, which celebrate and empower women leaders while promoting diversity and inclusion in the business community.

[withum.com/los-angeles](https://withum.com/los-angeles)



# How Your Banking Relationship Can Support Your Business



## John Meek, Executive Vice President and Director of Commercial Banking

John Meek serves as the regional director, leading the commercial banking teams for Enterprise Bank & Trust in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. John champions the culture and entrepreneurial spirit of a regional bank while serving the needs of privately owned businesses, developers and other success-minded individuals who value a high-touch, consultative banking relationship. John serves on the Junior Achievement of Orange County Board of Directors.

**T**he decisions you make about cash and capital have never been more critical. Now, more than ever, selecting a bank is one of the most important decisions a business makes. Your choice in a financial partner significantly impacts your financial strategy, cash flow, ability to fund expansion and — ultimately — your long-term success.

With many different types of financial institutions available, selecting a bank is seemingly complicated by the free services and low-rate offers advertised often by online-only banks.

One of the best places to start when choosing a financial institution is understanding the difference between a transactional bank and a bank that provides a consultative partnership.

## Both Types Exist for a Reason

Transactional banks can be thought of as offering basic banking services for free or at discounted rates. This business model focuses on delivering limited and repetitive banking products at a low cost. Many online-only banking service providers fall into this category.

By contrast, a consultative bank provides advice, guidance and enhanced services designed to maximize a client's long-term financial and business success. **This difference is key.**

Providing a higher level of service, consultative bankers get to know their clients in a way that other financial institutions do not. More than online statements and an occasional satisfaction survey, truly consultative banks are designed to be an integral part of a business's financial team. Choosing a bank that offers clients financial guidance gives business leaders access to strategic advice and financing options that align with your business's unique needs.

A consultative banking relationship proves particularly valuable when a creative financing solution instead of a traditional loan may be in the best interest of a business. Only with an understanding of the nuances of a business and knowledge of a wide array of financial products can a banking advisor recommend and assist with nontraditional financing products.

Enterprise Bank & Trust clients can benefit from specialized banking services, including professional practice financing, sponsor financing, property management banking, community association banking, customized life insurance financing, aircraft financing, and escrow and

legal services — all niche areas due to legal and regulatory requirements or other industry expertise.

The technical knowledge that a consultative banker brings to the relationship can result in many benefits, including favorable interest rates, low fees and flexible terms. Businesses that attempt to operate without such strategic financial counsel and knowledge of and access to creative financial options are at a distinct disadvantage.

## Look for Added Value

Additionally, a consultative bank should provide value-added extras such as educational opportunities and report on topics critical to small businesses. A great example is Enterprise's signature business education program, Enterprise University®. These popular educational courses cover best practices and new trends in management and leadership, finance and operations, human resources, sales and marketing and other trending topics relevant to business owners and leaders. Because expertise in these key functions is critical to operating any business, these courses are designed to quickly build critical skills and equip organizations for the future all at no cost to participants.

Regardless of the life stage your business is in, business owners tend to wear many hats. If you are serving in multiple roles or weigh in across business

operations, these expert-led business courses offer actionable strategies and relevant knowledge to help you tackle goals and challenges. Many businesses also incorporate Enterprise University into their talent development programs to support employees' growth and strengthen their teams. Learn more about leveraging Enterprise University to better your business at [enterprisebank.com/eu](https://enterprisebank.com/eu).

In addition to continuous learning opportunities like Enterprise University, professional growth can also come out of more informal avenues. Because comparing notes with and speaking to other business owners can be very helpful, Enterprise provides access to events, webinars and other networking opportunities where company leaders can make connections with peers.

## Seek Expert Guidance

Growing businesses need practical financial solutions and expert guidance, not just basic banking services. Having access to solutions tailored to your needs and a dedicated advocate within the bank could be the difference between failure and long-term success.

To learn more about how a consultative banker and a relationship with Enterprise can make a critical difference to your business, visit [enterprisebank.com/los-angeles](https://enterprisebank.com/los-angeles).



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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

# WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2024



PNC-Certified Women's Business Advocates are committed to supporting the achievement of women financial decision makers in Los Angeles and across the country.

## Together, We Can Elevate Women in Business

### Women-owned businesses boost the economy and provide greater opportunity for all

By MARIA CORONADO and DEBBIE MARSHALL

While California consistently ranks among the top states for women-owned businesses, women entrepreneurs nationwide historically receive less venture capital than men. According to a recent study by PitchBook, solely women-founded start-ups received 2.1% of total venture capital in the US in 2023.

Whether they are starting a business, investing for retirement or building a better future for their families, at PNC, we know that women want an ally who they can rely on and trust as they navigate life's challenges and opportunities.

In Los Angeles, PNC's commitment comes to life through support of nonprofits and other organizations dedicated to increasing economic opportunity for all Angelenos, such as Annenberg Tech. Annenberg Tech's Pledge-LA initiative launched the Access to Capital Catalyst, a pilot program that provided 10 LA-based businesses with catalytic funding and technical assistance designed to strengthen their core business model and help them secure new sources of capital.

Additionally, through our role as the Offi-

cial Women's Business Champion of Angel City Football Club professional women's team, we contribute to the club's Player 22 program. This program assists retired soccer players from around the league with grants, education, and counseling to help them start or enhance their businesses for a successful professional life after sports.

Player 22 has had a tremendous impact on the 2023 class of grantees, including Saskia Webber of The Union Sports GK Community in Los Angeles, who said, "We have been able to increase our revenue from soft launch to full launch by 600%." Sophia Fernandez of Mava Transportation LLC in Downey shared, "Since winning this grant, my company has gained much exposure on social media platforms. The opportunity to start a campaign also exposed my company to more opportunities for other grants and investors."

#### MAKING AN IMPACT

Year-round, PNC Bank provides information, resources, and tools and hosts high-impact events that connect, engage, empower, and inspire women to achieve their personal and professional financial goals. This includes our annual Women in Business Week, which just marked its 14th year in May.

PNC supports women financial decision makers through our Women's Business Development efforts. Central to this work is the passion and dedication of PNC's more than 5,000 Women's Business Advocates (WBAs) across the country—including nearly 90 in

the Los Angeles region. WBAs are PNC employees of any gender who have voluntarily completed a proprietary training program, applied for the certification designation, and are especially committed to supporting the achievement of women financial decision makers.

#### WHAT CAN YOU DO TODAY?

PNC is doing great things, but you might be wondering, "What can I do about this? How can I help?" Together, we can make a difference. These are actions you can take in your own life:

- **Provide a storytelling platform.** Invite women in business to speak at your company events, host social gatherings with businesswomen (coffee, lunch, dinner, social hour, etc.)
- **Foster social inclusion.** Invite women in business to be your guest at professional events, community events and business functions.
- **Provide credibility to women business leaders** by talking up their accomplishments in social and business interactions.
- **Celebrate and elevate women in business.** Nominate women in business to be honored in your community, industry, etc., such as the Los Angeles Business Journal Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards.
- **Amplify connective intelligence.** Refer women to others in your networks to help grow their business, connect women business owners to subject matter experts

(both inside and outside your companies) and connect like-minded individuals for knowledge sharing.

So why should you take action? Supporting women entrepreneurs and business owners is good for everyone and provides an immense economic boost. According to the US Census Bureau, women-owned businesses brought in \$2.1 trillion in receipts, employed 10.5 million people and held an annual payroll of \$499.4 billion in 2022.

We encourage you join us in our efforts to boost opportunity for all, to provide a better future for all Angelenos and individuals across the globe.



Maria Coronado ([maria.v.coronado@pnc.com](mailto:maria.v.coronado@pnc.com)) is managing director, corporate banking for PNC Bank.

Debbie Marshall ([deborah.marshall@pnc.com](mailto:deborah.marshall@pnc.com)) is senior vice president of client & community relations for PNC Bank. Learn more at [pnc.com](http://pnc.com).

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# The Rise of Women Accountants

By DENISE LeDUC FROEMMING

In the world of finance women have been steadily claiming their place in the accounting profession, challenging stereotypes and reshaping the landscape of finance. Indeed, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly 62 percent of accountants in the US are women and women have made up the majority of accountants and auditors in the US between 2020-23, extending their influence across various sectors, from corporate finance to public accounting firms.

And to that the trend of about 50 percent of new hires in the accounting field are female.

From the days when the profession was predominantly male-dominated to now, where women are making significant strides, their journey in the accounting world is a testament to resilience, talent and determination.

One of the most notable aspects of the rise of women in accounting is their increasing representation in leadership roles. Gone are the days when the corner office was solely reserved for men. Women are now breaking through the glass ceiling, assuming positions of power and influence within accounting firms and financial institutions. This shift not only reflects a commitment to diversity and inclusion, but also underscores the invaluable contributions that women bring to the table.

What sets women apart in the accounting profession is not just their numbers prowess but also their unique skill set and perspective. Women tend to excel in areas such as communication, relationship-building, and empathy, qualities that are invaluable in client-facing roles and team environments. Their ability to collaborate, multitask and adapt to change makes them indispensable assets in today's dynamic business world.

Moreover, women in accounting are not just climbing the corporate ladder; they are also breaking new ground and driving innovation within the profession. Whether it's spearheading initiatives for digital transformation, championing sustainability and social responsibility, or advocating for diversity and inclusion, women are at the forefront of shaping the future of accounting. Their vision, creativity, and willingness to challenge the status quo are instrumental in driving positive change and driving the profession forward.

To highlight and celebrate these achievements, CalCPA recently honored more than 40 female professionals who were nominated for our annual Women to Watch Award. Nominations were in three categories:

- **Emerging Leader:** Someone whose professional journey reflects growth in contribution to the profession and increased levels of leadership, responsibility and impact.

*'Women are now breaking through the glass ceiling. This shift not only reflects a commitment to diversity and inclusion, but also underscores the invaluable contributions that women bring to the table.'*

- **Experienced Leader:** Someone who encourages strategic thinking, innovation and action. They prioritize personal development and promote the development of their peers with guidance and mentoring.

- **Trailblazer:** Someone who is the first to lead the way for changes and improvements, showing others what is possible by overcoming and removing obstacles.

Our three winners—Cameron Martinez, Baker Tilly US, LLP (Emerging Leader); Emily Egkan, Withum (Experienced Leader); and Kathy Johnson, J.S. Held, LLC (Trailblazer) are shining examples of the contributions that can

be made to the profession at all career stages.

We also live out this issue at an organizational where Meredith Johnson and Andrea Cope have been serving as chairs of CalCPA and CalCPA Education Foundation, respectively. This comes on the heels of a year where we had another woman, Taiyika Dennis, lead us as immediate past CalCPA Chair.

The rise of women in the accounting profession is a remarkable story of progress, perseverance and possibility. From breaking barriers to blazing trails, women have emerged as driving forces of change and innovation in the finance industry. Their journey is not just about achieving equality; it's about redefining the future of accounting and creating a more inclusive and diverse profession for generations to come.

By continuing to advocate for gender equality, breaking down barriers and nurturing talent through mentorship opportunities, the accounting profession can further enhance its diversity and thrive in an ever-evolving business landscape. We all stand to benefit from the wealth of talent and potential that women bring to the table.



Denise LeDuc Froemming, CPA, CAE, MBA is president & CEO of CalCPA and CalCPA Education Foundation. Learn more at [calcpa.org](http://calcpa.org).

## CONGRATULATIONS GEOVANNY RAGSDALE!

**Boys & Girls Club of the West Valley is proud of our CEO—her nomination in the CEO of the Year category is well deserved. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to fellow nominees at the 2024 Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards.**

BGCWV has served West San Fernando Valley youth for the past 32 years. We express gratitude to everyone who supports us with time, talent, and treasure, allowing us to fulfill our mission—to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential, as productive, caring, responsible adults.

**Great Futures Start Here.**

To learn more about our impactful work, visit [BGCWV.ORG](http://BGCWV.ORG)



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF THE WEST VALLEY**

# New Study Reveals Women in STEM are Underrepresented in TV and Film

New findings from the latest report by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media reveal male STEM characters on-screen continue to outnumber female STEM characters, despite 71% of young women ages 11-24 agreeing it is important to have female STEM representation on-screen.

In collaboration with IF/THEN, an initiative of Lyda Hill Philanthropies, the new study, "Portray Her 2.0, An Analysis of 15 Years of Women in STEM On-Screen, 2007–2022," takes a closer look at the depiction of STEM characters in TV and film, and outlines recommendations for improving diverse STEM representation across entertainment media.

Founded by Academy Award Winning Actor Geena Davis, the Geena Davis Institute has worked to mitigate unconscious bias and reduce negative stereotyping in entertainment and media since 2004, and provides direct guidance and thought leadership on increasing representation across gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQIA+, disability, age, and body type.

"When children turn on their screens, the characters they see – or don't see – send a powerful message about who matters and who doesn't, and about what is considered possible

and what is not," said Geena Davis, founder and chair of the Geena Davis Institute. "As members of the entertainment industry, we have the opportunity to move past our longstanding default ideas about who should fill a STEM character role — and motivate more girls and women to emerge as future STEM leaders and pioneers."

The findings were debuted at an in-person event in Los Angeles on February 12. The Institute was joined by actors, STEM professionals, industry leaders and more, including Miranda Cosgrove, host and executive producer of Mission Unstoppable, Dr. Rae Wynn-Grant, co-host of Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Protecting the Wild, Melissa Navia, actor, Star Trek: Strange New Worlds, and Sara Scott, executive vice President of production development, Universal Pictures, who joined panel discussions to weigh in on the importance of female STEM representation on-screen.

Findings from "Portray Her 2.0" revealed:

- There has been little change in the amount of female STEM characters since 2007, with 37% in 2007-2017, and 38% of STEM roles portrayed by women from 2018-2022.
- From 2018-2022, STEM characters of



From left to right: Madeline Di Nonno, Geena Davis, Dr. Rae Wynn-Grant

color increased to 42% of all STEM roles, compared to 29% in 2007-2017.

- From 2018–2022, women were shown in more diverse STEM fields, with an increase in female characters shown as engineers (2% to 13%), and computer scientists or programmers (7% to 15%).
- 72% of women of color reported that characters of color like Shuri and Riri Williams in "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," had a posi-

tive influence on their interest in STEM.

"We are thrilled to support a study that explores this important topic, especially one that has a direct impact on shaping the next generation of STEM innovators," said Nicole Small, CEO of Lyda Hill Philanthropies and co-founder of IF/THEN. "We are firm believers that science is the key to solving most of our world's problems, and ensuring that women have an equal opportunity to succeed in STEM fields is a vital piece of the solution. I hope this report will demonstrate there is work to be done to balance the representation of women in STEM careers to further a culture shift inspiring young girls to explore these professions."

Founded in 2004 by two-time Academy Award Winning Actor Geena Davis, the Geena Davis Institute is the only global research-based organization working collaboratively within entertainment media to systemically increase the on screen representation of six major identities: gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQIA+, disability, age 50+ and body type. If they can see it, they can be it.

Visit [seejane.org](http://seejane.org) for more information.

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# Managing it All: Matador MBA Women

**W**omen in the CSUN Nazarian MBA program are managing it all — work, family obligations and classes. Some of them are even seeking higher degrees after earning their masters.

When asked why, there are a variety of reasons. Andrea, a mother of two toddler-aged children and working for a large public utility company, says she is earning her degree to pave a path for her children and help her advance in her career. Patricia, an executive in a tech firm in the valley, seeks to give back to her community and teach college-level business classes all while showing her three teenage children what is possible. Melissa, a marketing executive and soon-to-be-married recent Nazarian MBA graduate, is applying for a Ph.D. in marketing next year, hoping to earn her doctorate and innovate marketing research and teaching. These women are only some of the strong contingent of female professionals representing CSUN Nazarian's part-time MBA evening program.

## DIVERSE IDEAS FOR DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENTS

The MBA program at CSUN's David Nazarian College of Business and Economics takes pride in its students and alumni. Nazarian MBA students are accomplished professionals representing incredibly diverse backgrounds in a variety of industries in the San Fernando Val-

ley, Los Angeles County and Ventura County regions. Our graduate students view their MBA as a smart investment and have the desire to understand the business environment better and offer innovative insights.

## FLEXIBLE RELEVANCE

Classes are held Monday through Thursday from 7:00 – 10:00 p.m., and occasional Saturdays. Students typically take two courses per semester and complete MBA coursework in about 2.5 years. Our program provides flexibility for students who need to reduce or accelerate their academic load commensurate with career and family demands. Elective offerings focus on providing timely and relevant topics that help differentiate a student in their workplace and add career value.

## CONSULTING TO PAY IT FORWARD

Nazarian College MBA students not only learn, but they also pay that knowledge forward by helping businesses as part of the culminating experience in the Nazarian College Small Business Consulting Program. Through continued support from the Wells Fargo Foundation, MBA student teams consult with and address specific needs of small businesses and non-profits in the region. As a result, students gain confidence and greater connections, paying their investment forward to the community.



## PURPOSE LEADS RECOGNITION

Nazarian College MBA consulting teams pay it forward to the community and are recognized as producing quality, top-tier projects. Two teams were recently awarded first and second place in the 2024 Small Business Institute Project of the Year competition.

- **Graduate Feasibility Study/Comprehensive category for marketing:** Working with the client, The Rotary Club of Granada Hills. The student team included Ian Martin-Arujo, Katrin

Babayan, Jake Dougherty and Fatoumata Goita.

- **Graduate Consulting/Specialized category:** Working with the client, the Autonomy Research Center (ARC) for STEAMH at CSUN. The student team included Edgar Banuelos, Bhavani Prasad, Taline Sarkisian, Chantal Sood and Diane Tran.

## SOCAL MATADOR PRIDE

The program was recently ranked No. 18 "Best California MBA Schools and Programs" by University HQ and a Princeton Review "Best On-Campus MBA." CSUN ranks No. 6 among the "most transformative colleges" in the nation by Money Magazine, and The Wall Street Journal ranks it among the top three universities nationwide for diversity. Few MBA programs can equal CSUN Nazarian in graduating MBAs prepared to work and lead in a diverse and global business environment.

Housed on a beautiful 365-acre campus, CSUN is the fourth-largest university in California. Its 340,000 alumni include prominent business leaders, such as the man for whom the business college was named, David Nazarian. The university is home to the award-winning Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts and the LEED Gold-certified Student Recreation Center.

Learn more at [csun.edu/mba](https://csun.edu/mba).

## Fifth Third Bank congratulates the nominees of the Los Angeles Business Journal Women's Leadership Awards 2024!

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### Contact:

Elsa R. Burton  
 Los Angeles Regional Manager  
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**FIFTH THIRD**



# Authentic Leaders Lead to More Productive Workforces

By DANONE SIMPSON

It is a delight to be among all of you at the Women's Leadership Symposium and hear about your remarkable achievements. Reflecting on the impact we've collectively made in this world fills me with gratitude. We find ourselves in a time where women are not only flourishing but also authentically expressing themselves and driving change. However, there is still much to be done to heal our planet; combat issues like human trafficking and civil unrest; and bridge political divides that have persisted over the past century.

In our pursuit of progress, it's essential that we focus on creating exceptional products, advancing technology and providing valuable services in the US. Despite the economic setbacks we've faced – enduring at least 14 recessions since 1929 – we strive for a safe and thriving environment for our businesses, careers and families. Women today have the strength to bring their values, vulnerabilities, and innovative ideas to the workplace, inspired by the trailblazing efforts of our mothers and grandmothers.

Looking at the inspiring women acknowledged at the LA Business Journal's Women's Leadership Symposium, we witness a diverse array of professionals catalyzing change across various fields, from engineering to

**'It's imperative to acknowledge that we, as women, don't merely compete – we build and empower. Despite media comparisons to men, we are progressively asserting our presence and paving the way for future generations.'**

entertainment, from medicine to social services. According to a 2023 Forbes report, women-owned businesses excelled in 2022, with a remarkable 27% increase in earnings, surpassing the growth rate of male-owned firms. Sectors such as services, manufacturing, accommodation & food, and healthcare all witnessed significant growth among women-owned enterprises.

It's imperative to acknowledge that we, as women, don't merely compete – we build and empower. Despite media comparisons to men, we are progressively asserting our presence and paving the way for future generations. Celebrating a century since women were granted

the right to vote, our journey has been marked by milestones like the recent "Me Too" movement that highlighted the imperative for change and unity in the face of adversity.

Our history is rich with women who have led the way from battling racism, economic oppression, and sexual violence.

Betty Friedan, author of 1963's *The Feminine Mystique*, helped found the National Organization of Women (NOW) as a grassroots activist group to promote feminist ideas, lead social change, eliminate discrimination, and achieve and protect equal rights of all women and girls. In 1776, Abigail Adams made a plea to her husband, founding father

John Adams, to "remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors." She warned, "If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or say." Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought for women's right to vote in 1848, which took more than 70 years to culminate in the 19th Amendment, which gave all citizens the right to vote. Elizabeth Blackwell in 1849, became the first woman to graduate from medical school and become a doctor in the United States. Sojourner Truth delivered her first speech in 1851, "Ain't I just a woman? Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! I could work as much and eat as much as a man — when I could get it — and bear the lash as well! I have borne 13 children, and seen most off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I just a woman?" Amelia Earhart was the first woman pilot ever to fly across the Atlantic. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama and helped launch the civil rights movement. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay Act.

As a young actress, I turned down a

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PARTNERS

**Amy Russell & Cate Veeneman**

for being named Los Angeles Business Journal's 2024 Women of Influence



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**LISA KAUP**  
VP, Relationship Manager  
Commercial Banking – Middle Market

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**Congratulations to Lisa Kaup for being selected as a nominee for the 2024 Women's Leadership Symposium & Awards in the Woman to Watch category by the Los Angeles Business Journal.**

Lisa's experience and expertise have helped to make Banc of California one of the most respected business banks in the country.

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contract with a long running daytime series because I did not want to commit to “not getting pregnant for six years.” Only a few years later when I was working on the television show Dallas, I was so pleased at how good the production was to me when I returned to the show for another six years after my pregnancy. Times were changing and I thanked my mother, grandmothers and those before them for paving my path.

As a CEO, I recently received a poignant remark from an employee: “You are your authentic self; that allows others to remove their masks.” This resonated deeply with me, emphasizing the importance of transparency and authentic communication in fostering meaningful relationships in the workplace. Acknowledging the challenges of managing employees with diplomacy, I recognize the value of open dialogue and direct communication in addressing conflicts and fostering understanding.

Amidst the challenges brought by COVID-19, I coined a phrase, “I’m walking down the road with you,” to demonstrate empathy and solidarity with employees facing hardships. Empathy plays a pivotal role in navigating the complexities of personal and professional life, especially for women juggling responsibilities such as pregnancies, childcare and caregiving. The evolving legal landscape now offers greater protection for women in the workplace, reflecting a positive shift towards inclusivity and support for women’s diverse needs and roles.

In the current landscape, where personal

and professional lives intersect, it’s heartening to see large employers like Snap Inc., Babylist, Edmunds, and Blackline prioritizing childcare services as an essential employee benefit. Recognizing the importance of holistic support, these companies offer solutions for childcare, elder care, loved ones with disabilities, and even pet care, acknowledging the multifaceted needs of employees beyond work responsibilities. Small employers like our agency allow parents to bring in their children. I’ve noticed men also enjoy bringing their children to work and including them in their work life. While our needs are becoming more equal, young working mothers still carry a burden that employers are now caring about.

Our collective journey as women is one of resilience, advocacy and empowerment. It is crucial that we mentor and support each other, passing on our knowledge and experiences to uplift the next generation. By standing united and fostering positive change, we contribute to a brighter future – one that embraces inclusivity, equity and wellness for all. Each day, as we navigate challenges and embrace growth, we strengthen not just ourselves, but also our families, workplaces, and communities.



*Danone Simpson is CEO of Danone Simpson Insurance Services LLC dba Montage Insurance Solutions; chairwoman and founder of Simplicity; and founder and CEO of Bene Inc. and Legacy Heir.*



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LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL  
**WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM & AWARDS 2024**

# Addressing Gun Violence as a Public Health Crisis

By JOHN BAACKES

**G**un violence is a public health crisis. Here is just some of the clear and tragic evidence. May 31 was only the 152nd day of the year, but there have already been 182 mass shootings in the United States in 2024. On that day, the total number of gun deaths was 6,854, which included 93 children. In fact, firearms are the leading cause of death in children. Every month, 70 women are shot and killed by an intimate partner. In 2023, more than 40,000 Americans were killed by gunfire.

The facts and figures will make your head spin and your heart ache, but L.A. Care Health Plan will not let the devastating numbers keep it from taking action to address the crisis – its members and their communities deserve action. You see, while gun violence affects everyone in this country, it disproportionately impacts historically marginalized communities – the communities that make up a large majority of L.A. Care's membership. The health plan has been working for years to make a change and spread the word that health care leaders can play a role in finding solutions that will save lives.

As far back as 2018, when gun violence was taking 30,000 lives a year, the L.A. Care chief medical officer and I wrote about treating gun violence as you would treat any other epidemic. In our op-ed, we called for funding to research

gun violence, so the data could inform the appropriate solutions. At that time, research showed that gun violence was the least-researched cause of death, with more money spent to research hernia death, which account for a tiny fraction of deaths compared to firearms fatalities.

In 2022, in the wake of a stream of horrific mass shooting across the country, the L.A. Care Board of Governors unanimously approved a resolution on gun safety legislation, feeling a responsibility to take a leadership role in advocating for responsible gun safety laws and expanded resources for mental health. The health plan also hosted a Gun Violence Prevention Summit in partnership with the LA County Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention later that same year. The summit brought together health care leaders from across the county who wanted to elevate gun violence as a significant public health crisis and work together toward solutions.

Last year, L.A. Care joined the Office of Violence Prevention as it unveiled its Gun Violence Prevention Platform. The county announced it would take a public health approach in its platform, identifying priority areas and strategies to be implemented alongside a coalition of government and community partners, like L.A. Care. Among them, advocating for robust gun safety legislation, including the

**'While gun violence affects everyone in this country, it disproportionately impacts historically marginalized communities – the communities that make up a large majority of L.A. Care's membership.'**

reinstatement of a federal ban on assault weapons and large capacity magazines. In the same month, L.A. Care hosted a webinar aimed at helping healthcare providers develop strategies to join the effort to reduce gun violence.

This year, L.A. Care joined the Los Angeles County Medical Association and the LA County Department of Public Health in launched an educational campaign promoting gun safety, specifically advocating for the use of gun locks to prevent accidental gun violence involving children and youth at home. In a recent report, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that between 2003 and 2021, accidental gun deaths of children 17-years-old and younger

were most like to occur in the home. The campaign involved digital billboards along heavily traveled freeways in LA County, posters and social media posts.

Just last month, the health plan wrote a letter in support of Senate Bill 1253. The bill requires individuals bringing firearms into California to obtain a Firearm Safety Certificate (FSC) within 60 days. Current California law mandates that individuals acquiring firearms within the state obtain an FSC, but out-of-state acquisitions are not addressed. Senate Bill 1253 aims to close this loophole. The certificates are designed to educate firearm owners on essential safety practices and legal obligations, ensuring that every individual possessing a firearm is well informed and responsible.

As the largest health plan in Los Angeles County and the nation's largest publicly operated health plan serving more than 2.6 million members, L.A. Care is committed to advancing health equity, which means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. That means that people have the right to live without the threat of gun violence at every turn. L.A. Care will continue to take steps that will help keep its members and their communities safe – and alive.

John Baackes is CEO of L.A. Care Health Plan. Learn more at [lacare.org](http://lacare.org).



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# Women Business Owners Outpace the Market

**W**omen-owned businesses continue to fuel the economy, representing 39.1% of all businesses – over 14 million – employing 12.2 million workers, and generating \$2.7 trillion in revenue. According to the 2024 Wells Fargo Impact of Women-Owned Business Report, in partnership with Ventureer, CoreWoman, and Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPPP), the number of women-owned businesses between 2019 and 2023 increased at nearly double the rate of those owned by men; and from 2022 to 2023, the rate of growth increased to 4.5 times.

Whether it was during COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020 or supply chain disruptions throughout the pandemic, women business owners are driving economic growth:

- During the onset of the pandemic in 2020, despite business closures, women launched more businesses than they closed, while the number of men-owned businesses declined. Women-owned businesses also grew their workforces and increased their revenue while men's numbers shrank.
- From 2019 to 2023, women-owned businesses' growth rate outpaced the rate of men's 94.3% for number of firms, 252.8% for employment, and 82.0% for revenue.
- During the pandemic, women-owned businesses added 1.4 million jobs and \$579.6 billion in revenue to the economy.

- Nearly half a million women-owned businesses with revenues between \$250,000 and \$999,999 grew their aggregate revenues by about 30%, illustrating their ambition, grit, and readiness to cross the \$1 million revenue threshold.

"The impact that women-owned businesses make on the economy is undeniable. Even more impressive is that growth in women entrepreneurship – whether it was their workforce or revenue – grew during an extremely difficult time," said Wells Fargo Women's segment lead for small business, Val Jones. "From the trillions in revenue they contribute to the economy to the millions in jobs, women-owned businesses are coming out of the pandemic stronger than they went into the pandemic and many are thriving. It's a testament to their resiliency and the breadth and depth of support they've received from government entities, banks, corporations, and philanthropic organizations that must be sustained."

Also, during the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to the post-pandemic period, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino women-owned businesses increased at a much higher rate than all women-owned businesses. Between 2019 and 2023, Black/African American women-owned businesses saw average revenues increase 32.7% and Hispanic/Latino

women-owned businesses 17.1% compared to all women-owned businesses' 12.1% rise.

Further, women-owned businesses with 50 or more employees account for nearly half of women-owned businesses' employment and revenues. Currently, women-owned businesses with 50 or more employees average \$31.8 million in revenue generating \$1.3 trillion in aggregate revenue. If they achieved the average revenue of men-owned businesses with 50 or more employees, they would add \$1.2 trillion in revenue to the US economy.

"The surge in growth rates of women-owned firms with more than 50 employees proves their strength and adaptability during and post the pandemic era," said Wells Fargo Women's segment lead for commercial banking, Judith Goldkrand. "To sustain the growth and close the gaps, it's important that we continue to create opportunities that help these businesses flourish, including removing barriers to capital, providing technical assistance, and offering support with business certification."

## INDUSTRY TRENDS

More than a decade ago, women-owned businesses were concentrated in just three industries. Now, half of all women-owned businesses (50%) are concentrated in these four industries:

- **Other services** (hair and nail salons,

pet care, laundries, and dry cleaners): In 2023, women owned 2,267,000 other services companies, accounting for 16.2% of all women-owned businesses.

- **Professional, scientific, and technical services** (legal, bookkeeping, and consulting businesses): In 2023, women owned 2,017,000 businesses in this category, accounting for 14.4% of all women-owned businesses.

- **Administrative, support and waste management, and remediation services** (office administration, staffing agencies, and security and surveillance services): In 2023, women owned 1,671,000 businesses of this type, accounting for 11.9% of all women-owned businesses.

- **Healthcare and social assistance** (child day care and homecare providers, mental health practitioners, and physicians): In 2023, women owned 1,588,000 healthcare and social assistance companies, accounting for 11.3% of all women-owned businesses.

While these industries have the most women-owned businesses, between 2019 and 2023, the sectors that saw the most significant growth (50%) were in finance, insurance firms, real estate, transportation, and the warehouse industry.

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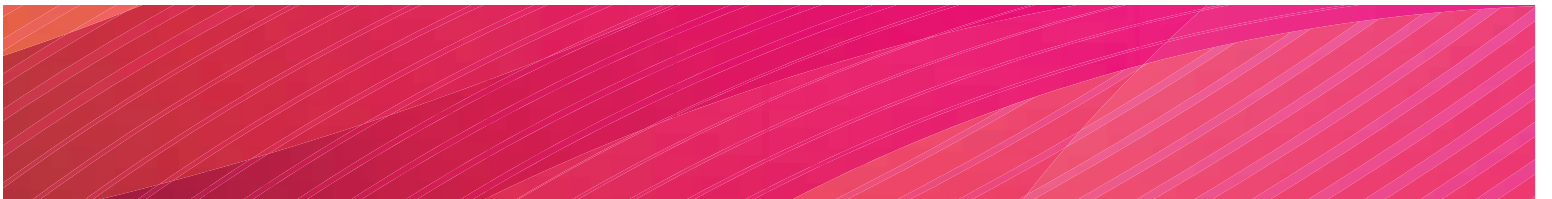
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# Corporate Commitment to DEI: Where it Stands Today

The diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) pendulum has begun a swing downward from its high point of corporate adoption following the civil unrest in 2020, which saw consumers and employees demand organizations make public social commitments aimed at creating a more equitable workplace.

In 2023, ROI, an internal communication and employee engagement consultancy, reported a 55% reduction in requests for DEI-related communication support year over year. The ongoing DEI work that ROI supports its clients with has seen budget reductions upwards of 30%, almost double the reduction compared to the average of 15% for other employee-focused work which is expected in a churning marketplace.

Companies in the US are feeling the multi-prong effects of the SCOTUS rulings striking down affirmative action in college admissions, a downward-trending tech market that has led to waves of layoffs, and increased political polarization that has given rise to extremely visible consumer backlash, particularly in the LGBTQ+ space.

Hiring for the position of Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) has declined, tenure rates for CDOs are a third of their C-suite counterparts,

and DEI roles have a one in three chance of turnover which is 12% higher than non-DEI roles.

Despite the broad-stroke downturn, ROI has noted that DEI sentiment and support remains steadfast and consistent, particularly in companies with DEI foundations prior to 2020. Those organizations have the benefit of having weathered previous marketplace downturns while understanding DEI as a key component to innovation and marketplace edge, particularly in the technology and energy sectors.

ROI also noted that it's critical to make visible progress at the leadership level as it remains an important factor in the perceived success of DEI initiatives. During a recent DEI survey for an ROI client, a common employee-vocalized theme was summed up: "It doesn't matter what you say. If we don't see the leadership stats becoming more diverse, it doesn't matter what the communications are."

ROI predictions for trends in the DEI space in 2024 include:

- CDOs will narrow their focus and lean into data and metrics to showcase progress against specific objectives.
- Reduced DEI roles will resurface as func-



tions within departments such as HR, Product Development, and Recruiting.

- Companies will undergo a regrouping and restructuring of publicly stated DEI goals.
- There will be a reduction of employee resource groups (ERGs) and community engagement financial commitments.

Founded in 2001 by CEO Barbara Fagan,

ROI specializes in assisting companies from various industries, including tech, retail, energy, bioscience, finance, manufacturing, and consumer packaged goods, with business strategy and transformation, leadership changes, mergers and acquisitions, culture change, employee engagement, and more.

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# New \$25 Million Program Launched to Increase Capital Access for California's Small Businesses

The Technical Assistance for Capital Readiness Program will connect small businesses to lenders, spur 40,000 new loans in the next five years

The California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), part of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, recently announced participants in its new Technical Assistance for Capital Readiness Program.

Funding for this \$25.3 million program comes from the US Treasury's State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), which was created by the US Congress in 2010 and reauthorized through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The SSBCI is designed to spur investment in businesses with 1-9 employees, small manufacturing companies, and businesses operated by owners from underserved communities.

This program will help underserved small business owners by:

- Guiding them through the loan application process, spurring the the approval of an

estimated 40,000 new business loans over the next five years

- Building legal, accounting, and financial management skills to access the capital needed to get started and scale
- Increasing awareness of state-backed capital support programs

Additionally, it will support the deployment of \$1.1 billion in federal funding separately approved for capital support programs from the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank) and the California Pollution Control Financing Authority. Lenders across the state are expected to leverage the \$1.1 billion in funding for existing capital support programs into \$18 billion in new loans for small businesses over the next five years.

"California's 4.1 million small businesses are the backbone of our economy and provide nearly half of the state's private sector jobs. But too many of them struggle to access the capital they need to grow. This is a historic opportunity to catalyze inclusive economic growth and build a stronger California," said Tara Lynn Gray, CalOSBA director.

At an event held in San Francisco recently for network partners, CalOSBA

named CAMEO, California's statewide small business network and leading voice for businesses with one to five employees, as the Capital Readiness Network Manager for this program. In this role, CAMEO will lead a network of 29 resource partners that seeks to ensure underserved small business owners are equipped to access capital from lenders offering both state-backed and traditional loan offerings. This new network of technical assistance and lending partners began working with Main Street borrowers in April as part of the state's ongoing efforts to support the small businesses community.

"CAMEO is honored to be selected as the network manager for the Technical Assistance for Capital Readiness Program and to help ensure that small businesses across the state have full and equal access to this incredible opportunity," said Carolina Martinez, CEO of CAMEO.

The Technical Assistance for Capital Readiness network also includes the Los Angeles SBDC Network; the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation; and others.

CalOSBA already oversees the California Small Business Support Centers, which provide no-cost 1:1 consulting and training for small businesses. This new partner network through the Capital Readiness Program will complement

those existing services but focus exclusively on capital access to help business owners navigate the loan process, prepare their loan applications, and determine what loan products, if any, will be the best fit.

More than two-thirds of small business-owners report that they will seek capital over the next 12 months, but many don't think they understand all the available options. Many diverse business-owners – including women, people of color, veteran and LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs and other business-owners in low-to-moderate-wealth, rural, or disaster-impacted communities — believe they have experienced declines on loan applications unrelated to the fundamentals of their businesses. This program is designed to help level that playing field.

CalOSBA's mission is to make sure state services to support small business growth are available to entrepreneurs in every zip code. The Office also oversees the build-out of 13 Accelerate California Inclusive Innovation Hubs to help diversify the innovation economy and the Outsmart Disaster preparedness training program to help small businesses become more resilient in an era of rapid climate change.

For more information, visit [business.ca.gov](http://business.ca.gov).

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# Women Underrepresented in Staffing Leadership Roles

**W**omen comprise the majority of internal workforces in US staffing firms, but remain underrepresented at the executive, c-suite, and board levels. This is according to data from the third gender equity benchmark survey led by the Women Business Collaborative (WBC) with support from the American Staffing Association (ASA), National Association of Personnel Services (NAPS), Staffing Industry Analysts (SIA), and TechServe Alliance.

“This is our third year to publish this landmark survey measuring gender equity progress across the staffing industry,” said Kip Wright, WBC board member. “The survey shows both incremental progress while still making it clear that more needs to be done to open doors to leadership roles for women in staffing.”

The WBC created a dynamic dashboard to view survey results, WBC Benchmark Survey on Gender Equity in the Staffing Industry. Survey data with SIA analysis is available on SIA's website as a complimentary report, “Insights on Gender Parity in the US Staffing Industry 2023.”

“Although progress is slow, the staffing industry does perform better than the broader world of work. Organizations should use this data as a catalyst for continued improvement,” said Ursula Williams, chief operating officer for SIA. “Our research continues to show gender equity is so much more than an initiative; it is a vital demand necessary in every corner of the

staffing industry. Empowering women in staffing leadership unlocks diverse perspectives, fosters innovation, and establishes a more dynamic and progressive approach for the industry and society overall.”

Women remain highly important and visible in the US staffing industry according to this year's survey. The 2023 WBC Benchmark Survey showed that women comprised a median 66% of staffing firm internal staff, on par with 2022. However, they represented only half of executive positions and just 33% of board seats, the latter representing a drop of 3% year-over-year.

“This survey underscores the positive standing of our industry compared to others, highlighting strong representation of women. However, it also reveals a stark contrast within our c-suites, where gender parity for women is lacking,” said Teresa Delibert, NAPS chair. “I encourage organizations to leverage this data as a catalyst for positive change, steering us in the right direction towards a more inclusive future.”

The study featured additional key findings:

- Women accounted for 36% of staffing firm founders and 40% of CEO positions. Commercial staffing had the highest representation at 37%, followed by healthcare staffing at 36%.
- When the founder of the company was a woman, 84% of CEOs were female. Conversely, only 17% of CEOs were female if the founder of the staffing firm was male.

**‘Our research continues to show gender equity is so much more than an initiative; it is a vital demand necessary in every corner of the staffing industry.’**

- Interestingly, staffing firms with a female CEO received a very positive Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 83, compared to an NPS of 47 for the staffing firms with a male CEO. However, other factors could be at play.

- Staffing companies with female CEOs scored higher employee satisfaction in all areas recorded. Female CEOs scored, on average, 87% in meeting their staffs' expectations compared to 77% if the staffing company CEO was male.

- DE&I and well-being rank low in concerns and priorities based on study data. New business development ranked as the most pressing concern/priority at 68% of respondents.

- Only half of survey respondents measure, track, and analyze pay equity in their organization. Men are significantly more optimistic than

women about gender and ethnic pay equity.

“The persistent underrepresentation of women at the leadership levels is a stark reminder that our industry must continue its efforts to be more proactive and intentional toward creating equal opportunities. Tracking and measuring pay equity within a staffing firm is critical to achieving this goal,” said Susan Donohoe, chief of staff and chief program officer at TechServe Alliance. “Promoting gender diversity in the C-suite is not just a matter of social responsibility; it is a strategic business imperative that can positively impact a company's performance, culture, and long-term sustainability. We have an opportunity here as an industry to strive for better and foster an environment where women can thrive and contribute at every level.”

“Women need access to more opportunities to thrive in staffing. Conversations like the upcoming webinar are vital to keeping the topic of developing future women leaders in staffing front and center in our industry,” said Joanie Bily, chair of ASA. “I'm proud to serve as chair of the American Staffing Association, an organization whose board has achieved gender parity. ASA will continue to help women staffing leaders receive the support they need to reach their full career potentials.”

Learn more by visiting [wbcollaborative.org](http://wbcollaborative.org).

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