

McKenna Center

Los Angeles, CA - Northridge – UPBI/C-STE Entrepreneurship Program

Location: Los Angeles, CA - Northridge

Venue: California State University, Nazarian College of Business and Economics

Intro to the City and Overview of the Economy

San Fernando Valley, commonly known as "The Valley," is a vibrant region located in Los Angeles County, California. It comprises a large portion of the city of Los Angeles and includes several independent cities such as Burbank, Glendale, and Calabasas. Known for its suburban character and diverse population, the Valley is home to nearly 2 million people. Its cultural diversity includes significant Latino, Asian, and Armenian communities, which enrich the region's educational, cultural, and economic landscape.

The San Fernando Valley is a critical hub for the Southern California economy, featuring a range of industries such as entertainment, technology, healthcare, and education. Regional Assets: Home to major film studios (e.g., Warner Bros., Universal), CSUN, and a robust network of K-12 schools and hospitals.

Spearheaded by institutions like the CSUN Center for Social and Technology Entrepreneurship (C-STE), the region offers robust support for startups through bootcamps, pitch competitions, seed funding, and access to networks of mentors and experts.

The Challenge

Despite being home to economic powerhouses, parts of the San Fernando Valley experience significant poverty and disadvantage. Many areas have under-resourced schools and limited access to healthcare and transportation.

Youth from low-income and marginalized communities face barriers in accessing quality education and economic mobility. C-STE addresses these disparities by providing entrepreneurial training and support to underserved populations.

The program and challenge

Name: UPBI/C-STE Entrepreneurship Program

The program, operated and managed by the Center for Social and Technology Entrepreneurship (C-STE) at CSUN, is designed to serve local adult community members, primarily from underserved and disadvantaged backgrounds in the San Fernando Valley, with outreach extending to the greater Los Angeles area. Launching in Fall 2025 and concluding in Spring 2026, the program will hold sessions on Saturday mornings at CSUN. What makes this initiative unique is its holistic approach: participants will receive a stipend to support their engagement, while benefiting from practical, real-world entrepreneurship training, mentorship, project-based learning, and community-building activities. The first cohort will include 25–35 participants, with ambitious plans for exponential growth in future cycles.

The long-term vision for the UPBI/C-STE Entrepreneurship Program includes expanding participant capacity, building an alumni network for peer mentorship, and developing an on-campus community business incubator. We aim to scale the program regionally and digitally, offering hybrid sessions and additional cohorts year-round. Strategic partnerships with local organizations, industries, and city leaders will be leveraged to ensure the program becomes a sustainable economic mobility pathway for underserved communities:

- 29% of households report income under \$50,000 p.a.
- 37% report a high school degree or less and 63% report some college or less
- 13.2% of persons live below the poverty line
- 17% of children and 14% of seniors live below the poverty line
- 53% of occupied units are rentals
- 74% of the population moved here prior to 2017
- 38% of the population is foreign-born

- In 2024 Homeless Census, SFV had 6,997 unsheltered people and 3,704 sheltered people (total 10,701), an increase of 258 over 2023
- Majority of homeless population is PoC,
- 54% reported Economic hardship as the primary reason for new homelessness (<https://cao.lacity.gov/Homeless/hsc20240801b.pdf>)

U.S. Census Bureau (2023).

In January 2024, at least 187,084 people were experiencing homelessness in California, according to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. This represents 0.48% of California's population—one of the highest per capita rates in the nation. California also has the highest percentage of unsheltered homeless individuals among all U.S. states, with two-thirds of its homeless population sleeping on the streets, in encampments, or in their cars. Nearly one in four homeless people in the U.S., and 45% of all unsheltered homeless individuals, live in California. Even those who are sheltered often face instability, with 90% of homeless adults in California having spent at least one night without shelter over a six-month period.

Contact: David Nazarian College of Business and Economics

18111 Nordhoff Street

Northridge, CA 91330

Email: kene.turner@csun.edu

CSUN[®]

CALIFORNIA
STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHRIDGE

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST ,
KEOUGH SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS ,



McKenna Center

Notre Dame, IN 46556 USA

[© 2022 University of Notre Dame](#)