



Women Owned Businesses in California

USC Research Brief

Adjunct Associate Professor Katherine Perez
USC Sol Price Public Policy School Researcher Fanny Oyang

March 2025



CALCHAMBER
**Women's
Leadership
Council**



Executive Summary

01

As of 2022, women owned businesses comprise 39% of all businesses in California.

02

California has the highest number of women owned businesses in US.

03

Between 2022-2023, women started businesses **4.5 times compared to men**

04

Nationally, **14 million** women owned businesses employ **12.2 million** workers, and generate **\$2.7 trillion** in revenue

05

California women owned businesses added **\$580 billion in revenue** from 2019-2023, out of a \$3.7 trillion national revenue

06

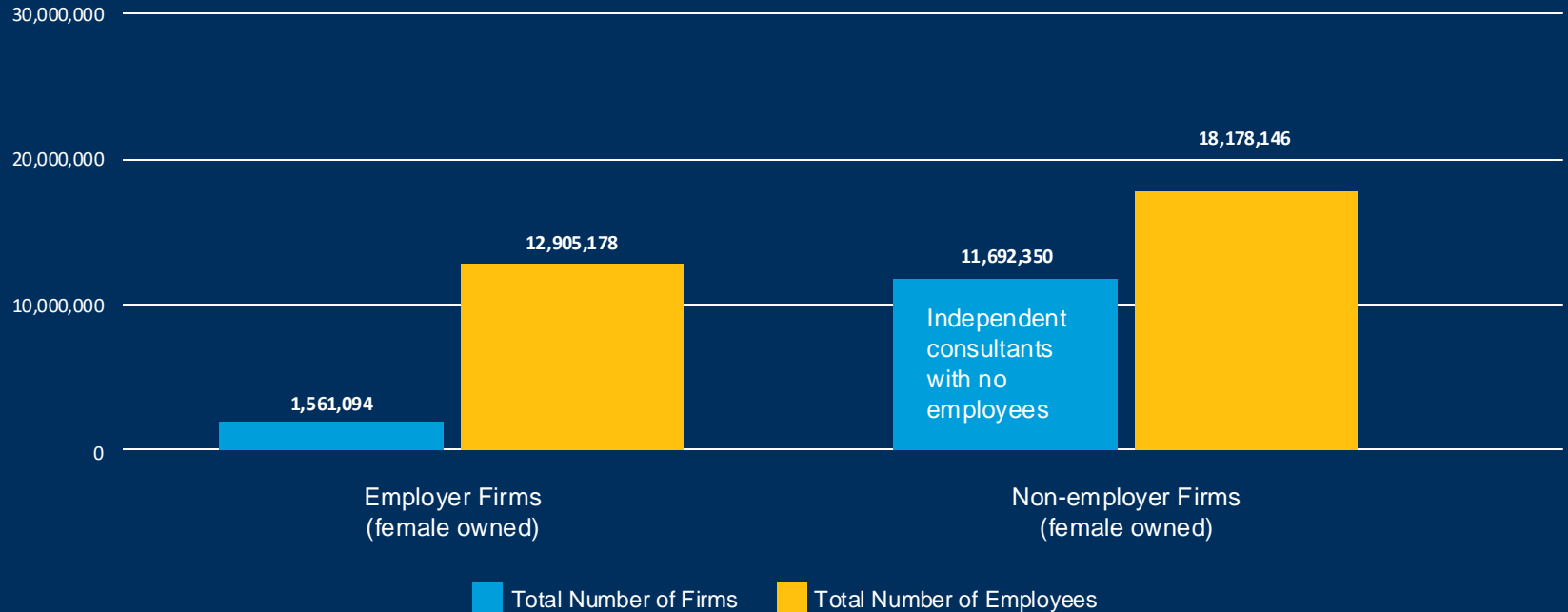
Women made up **45.9%** of workers, and owned **43.1%** of businesses.

07

Top Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in California for women owned businesses include: **Los Angeles, Long Beach, Anaheim.**

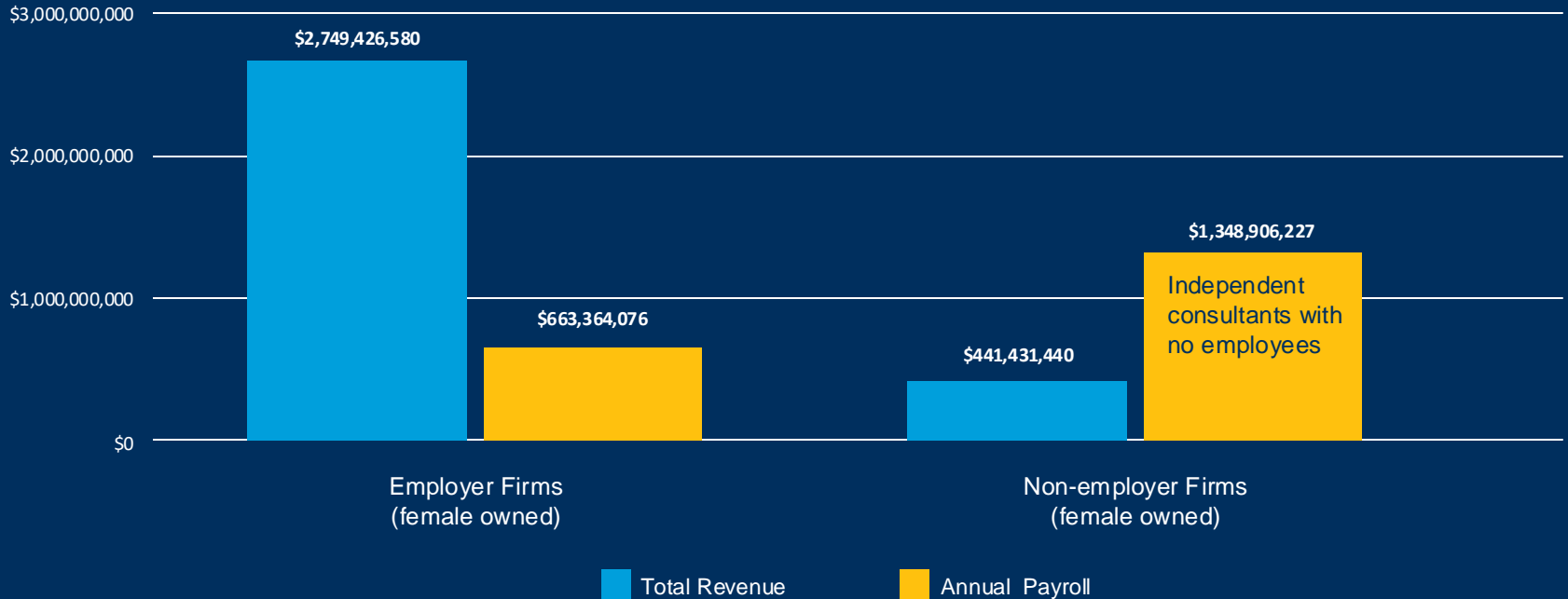


WOC Business Statistics





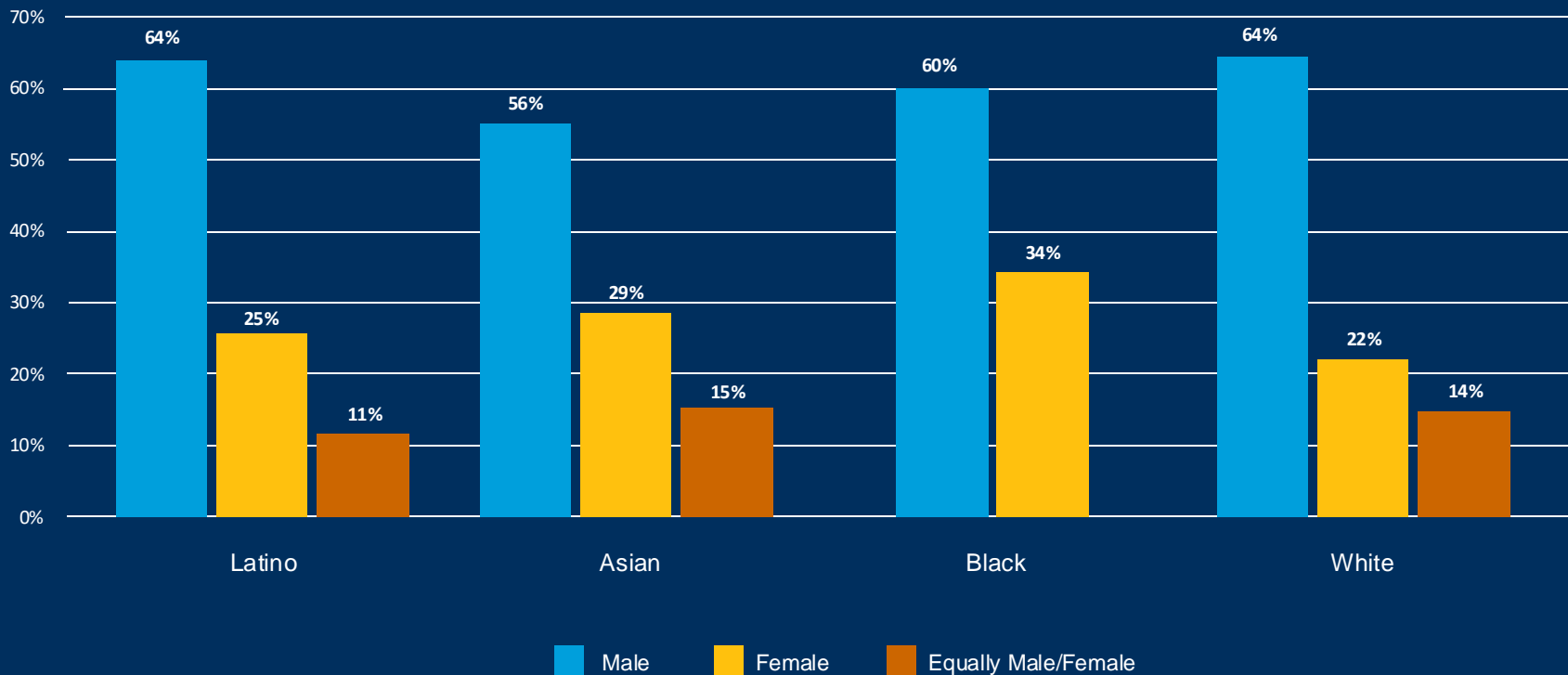
WOC Annual Revenue and Payroll of Firms



*Revenue is the total amount of income prior to deducting expenses; payroll is the compensation and benefits made out to employees

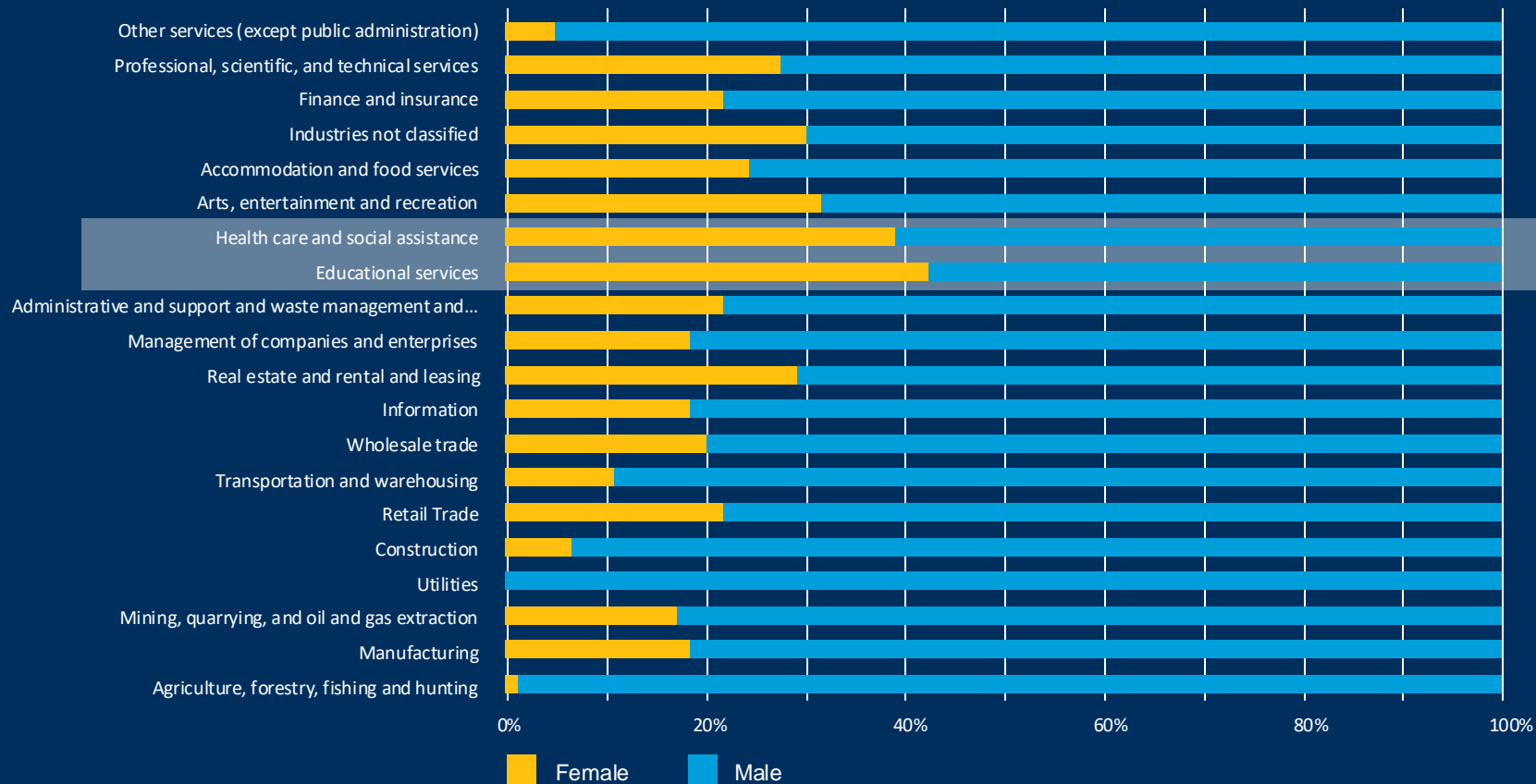


Employment Statistics by Race & Ethnicity



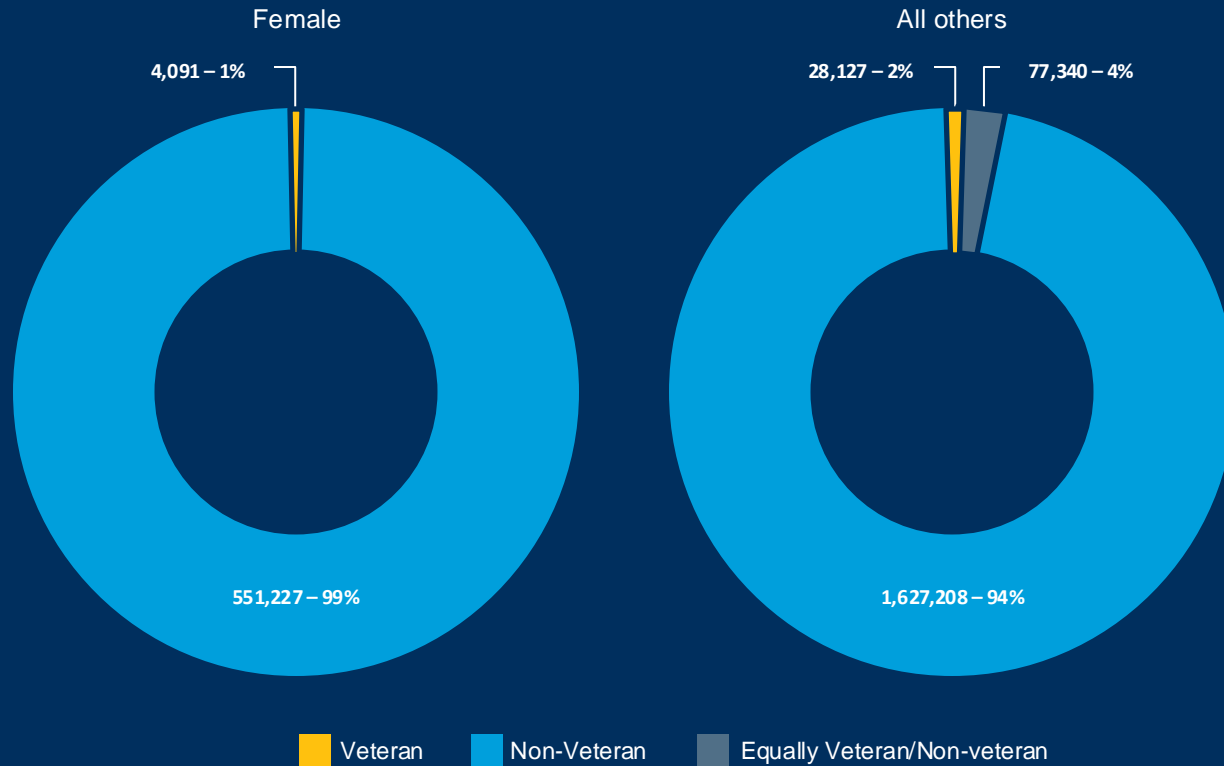


Employment Sector Breakdown by Sex



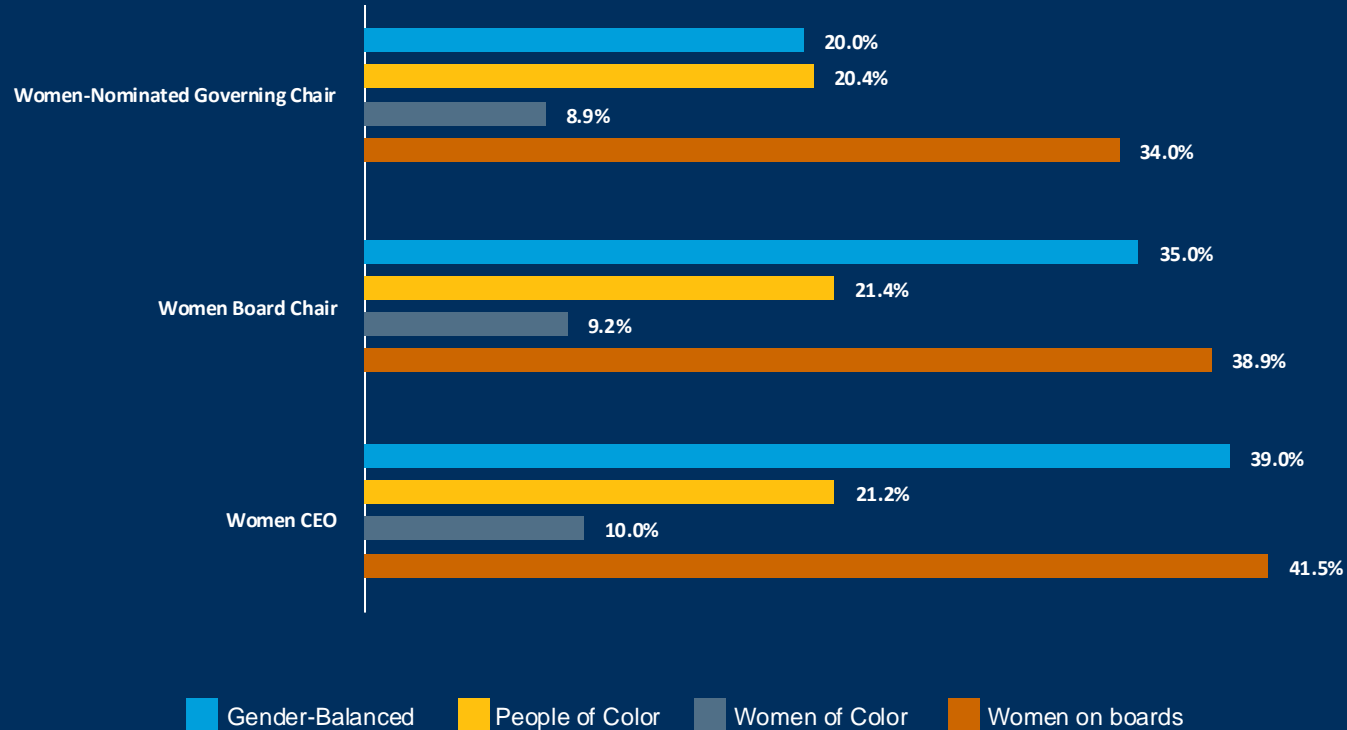


Veterans





Women in Leadership





Recommendations to support Women Owned Businesses

01

Support inclusive policies in California and reduce barriers to women owning businesses.

02

Continue research focused on women business needs and the impact of women on California's business environment.

03

Raise awareness of financing options and investment opportunities to increase women's access to capital.

04

Support networks for women business owners, increase contracting opportunities.



Additional Considerations

Uncertainty at the federal level: 1) tariffs, 2) immigration, 3) federal funding.

*Source: [Here's what the Trump presidency means for small businesses](#)

Compromised 2020 Census: Conducting the 2020 Census faced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent operational difficulties, and concerns about data quality. These challenges resulted in undercounts and overcounts in certain states and demographic groups, potentially impacting the allocation of resources and political representation. Ultimately, these obstacles underscore the importance of accurate and reliable Census data for ensuring fair and equitable governance and resource allocation.

*Source: *U.S. Census Bureau*

LA Fires: L.A.'s restaurants and other independent businesses say they are hurting and need the city's help in the wake of last month's fires. Some restaurants have seen as much as a 90% decrease in sales. Some are already closing because of it.

*Source: [L.A. restaurateurs petition lawmakers as businesses shutter in wake of fires - Los Angeles Times](#)



Glossary of terms

Employee vs. Non-employee (independent contractor)

The key difference between **employees** and **non-employees** lies in the nature of the working relationship and the level of control an employer has over the individual's work. **Employees** are typically under the direct control and direction of an employer, receive regular wages, and are eligible for various employee benefits.

Non-employees (often referred to as independent contractors, freelancers, or temporary workers) operate more independently, often under contract for specific projects or tasks, and have more flexibility to set their own schedules and work load. Some laws such as wage and hour laws or leave laws may not apply to them.



Reference – Data sources

[US Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#)

[Employment Development Department \(EDD\)](#)

[Report 50 Women on 50 Boards](#)

[2024 WIPP \(Women Impacting Public Policy\) Education Institute](#)

[Mount Saint Mary's University Report, 2023](#)

[National Women's Business Council, 2023](#)

[Wells Fargo 2024 Impact Report](#)

[US Census Bureau ABS, 2022-2023](#)

[US Census Bureau NES-D, 2021](#)

[Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023](#)

[Catalyst, 2023](#)



Reference – Reports & Articles

Los Angeles Times - *April 28, 2024*: [Growth of Women Business Owners Outpaces the Market](#)

UCLA, Latino Policy & Politics Institute: [Latino-owned businesses in California](#)

Quantamental Research - August 2023: [Breaking Boundaries: Women Poised for Milestone Achievement in Parity Amid Otherwise Bleak Outlook](#)

Catalyst - *February 1, 2023*: [Women of Color in the United States](#),

Wells Fargo Stories [Women-owned businesses are driving economic growth. Here's what entrepreneurs should know.](#)

California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA): [Women's Business Center \(WBC\)](#)

Spectrum News - *March 22, 2023*: [California is home to most women-owned businesses in nation](#)

U.S. Small Business Administration: Office of Advocacy: [2022 Small Business Profile](#) and [2024 Small Business Profile](#)

Public Policy Institute of California: [California's Businesses](#)

CalMatters: [Is pay transparency coming to California?](#)

Governor of California: [California's economy leads the nation](#)



Methodology

This briefing is based on data from the United States Census Bureau, as well as supporting literature findings on statewide and nationwide Women employment and ownership.

Employer firm data summaries used 2021 to 2022 data from the Annual Business Survey (ABS) .

Nonemployer firm data summaries used the Nonemployer Statistics by Demographics Survey (NES-D).

For both employer and nonemployer firm data, “Female” corresponds to the “Female” sex category while “All Others” constitute both “Male” and “Equally Male/Female” categories.

Data entries with insignificant data from the ABS and NES-D were omitted.