



**BBB
BREAKTHROUGH
ACCELERATOR**

Impact Report

2025

breakthrough accelerator + growth surge bootcamp





BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

Executive Summary

In 2025, Better Business Bureau piloted the **Breakthrough Suite of Entrepreneur Programs** to advance trust in the marketplace and support sustainable business growth. Designed to strengthen small business stability and long-term viability across BBB service areas, the program intentionally addresses gaps in access to education, mentorship, capital, and professional networks. The Breakthrough Suite is delivered through the **BBB Foundation for Education and Entrepreneur Leadership (F.E.E.L.)**, BBB's 501(c)(3), which builds ethical communities by expanding access to education, mentorship, and resources for businesses and students, prioritizing access where barriers exist. Through F.E.E.L., BBB ensures responsible stewardship of charitable investment while supporting ethical leadership and lasting community resilience.

The **Breakthrough Accelerator** served entrepreneurs across Arizona and California, while the **Growth Surge BootCamp** expanded access to high-impact training across Phoenix, San Diego, and the Central and Inland California regions. Through the 10-week Breakthrough Accelerator and the two-day Growth Surge BootCamp, BBB served 200 small business owners across diverse industries and stages of growth. These programs combined structured education, individualized mentorship, capital access, and community-based support to address real-world business challenges and reduce structural barriers related to capital, networks, and business infrastructure.

Collectively, the Breakthrough Suite delivered over 1,000 customized one-on-one mentorship sessions, engaged more than 60 subject matter experts, and deployed \$195,000 in microgrant funding directly into local businesses.

By strengthening revenue-generating businesses and expanding access to capital, professional networks, and peer community, the Breakthrough Suite represents a strategic investment in long-term economic resilience, workforce stability, and job creation potential. Businesses supported through the program are better positioned to retain employees, create new jobs, and contribute to sustained economic activity within their local economies.



BREAKTHROUGH

Program Overview

Breakthrough Accelerator provides a **deep, multi-week experience** focused on sustainable business growth, while the Growth Surge BootCamp offers a **two-day, high-impact point** for entrepreneurs seeking immediate tools and momentum. Together, these programs function as a coordinated pipeline that supports business owners at multiple stages of development while maximizing the reach, efficiency, and impact of sponsor and philanthropic investment.



The Breakthrough Suite was intentionally designed to serve **small business owners across diverse industries and growth stages**, including barrier-impacted entrepreneurs whose businesses contribute meaningfully to local economies yet often grow without consistent access to capital, professional networks, advanced business infrastructure, or supportive peer communities.

PROGRAM MODEL

Four Core Pillars

The Breakthrough Suite is grounded in four interconnected pillars that reinforce business outcomes, participant engagement, and long-term resilience.

01 Education

Participants engage in practical, expert-led instruction focused on financial management, operations, marketing, digital strategy, leadership development, and legal foundations.

02 Mentorship

Entrepreneurs receive individualized guidance through customized one-on-one mentorship sessions with experienced professionals, providing tailored insight, accountability, and problem-solving support aligned to each business's stage of growth.

03 Capital Access

Direct microgrant funding, capital readiness education, and exposure to financial institutions equip entrepreneurs to invest in their businesses, stabilize operations, and pursue future funding opportunities.

04 Community

Intentional peer cohorts, accountability pods, shared learning environments, and relationship-based networks reduce isolation, strengthen trust, and support long-term business resilience. Community plays a critical role in engagement, retention, and outcomes that extend beyond the formal program period.

B R E A K T H R O U G H

Accessibility, Participation & Community Support

Program design prioritized accessibility to ensure that high-potential business owners could fully engage without sacrificing business or family responsibilities.

Throughout the year, **BBB provided 1,100 meals to entrepreneurs** participating in in-person programming, including meals for children attending on-site childcare. Weekly childcare support and hybrid participation options reduced common access barriers related to time, caregiving, cost, and geography.



Childcare services, catering, and select facilitation were intentionally sourced from BBB program alumni whenever possible. This approach **reinvested resources directly back into the small business ecosystem, supported alumni revenue growth, and reinforced a cycle of community-based economic participation.**

By addressing practical needs and recirculating investment within the ecosystem, BBB strengthened attendance, deepened engagement, and enabled entrepreneurs to remain fully present throughout the duration of the programs.

BBB BREAKTHROUGH ACCELERATOR

Topics Covered & Program Accessibility

Over the 10-week accelerator, participants engaged in a rigorous and relevant curriculum that addressed real-time business challenges and core growth areas, including:

- ✘ Business operations and strategic planning
- ✘ Brand storytelling and business positioning
- ✘ Marketing strategy and content creation
- ✘ Legal structure and intellectual property
- ✘ Sales strategies and lead generation
- ✘ Resilience, burnout prevention, and wellbeing
- ✘ Website development and optimization
- ✘ Financial literacy and access to capital
- ✘ Leadership development and time management
- ✘ AI tools and digital automation



STATISTICS

Key Program Metrics

200

total small
business
owners
served

108

Breakthrough Accelerator
Graduates

92

Growth Surge BootCamp
Attendees



\$195,000

in microgrants deployed directly into
local businesses

1,000+

customized one-on-one mentorship
sessions delivered

Additional events included:

- access to capital panels with lending partners
- professional headshot days
- vision board sessions
- curated networking events
- educational summits
- live content creation sessions
- mindset and emotional well-being sessions
- ongoing community engagement opportunities

60+

subject matter experts led specialized trainings across multiple domains

1,100

meals provided to entrepreneurs and participating children



**Destination
Baby Co.**

provided on-site childcare each week, removing key barriers to access





ANALYSIS

Business Outcomes & Growth

To measure the effectiveness of the BBB Breakthrough Accelerator, participants completed standardized pre- and post-program assessments across core business capability areas. Results show significant, measurable growth in confidence, skills, and operational readiness.

Across 27 shared assessment metrics, participants demonstrated strong gains in nearly every business competency area, with the most substantial growth occurring in **capital readiness, strategic clarity, and operational foundations**. These results reflect meaningful movement from early-stage uncertainty to actionable readiness.

Top Areas of Growth

- ✘ Knowledge of small business grants increased by **124%**
- ✘ Clarity on steps needed to reach business goals increased by **72%**
- ✘ Having a clear sales strategy or process increased by **65%**
- ✘ Understanding legal business structure increased by **63%**
- ✘ Knowledge of contracts and business compliance increased by **56%**
- ✘ Confidence creating marketing content increased by **53%**
- ✘ Consistency in marketing efforts increased by **43%**
- ✘ Clearly defined business goals increased by **42%**
- ✘ Comfort tracking income and expenses increased by **41%**

ANALYSIS

Participant Satisfaction & Engagement

100%

Recommendation Rate

All surveyed participants indicated they would recommend the program to another business owner.



OVERVIEW

Microgrants as a Catalyst for Business Growth



The microgrant component was a cornerstone of the Breakthrough Suite and a critical driver of impact.

By infusing direct capital at a pivotal moment in each entrepreneur's journey, microgrants enabled immediate reinvestment into operations, marketing, technology, compliance, and revenue-generating activities. **100% of participants reported that the microgrant played a meaningful role in strengthening their business and accelerating progress.**

Entrepreneurs consistently described the microgrant as a turning point that allowed them to act on strategies learned through the program, reduce financial strain, and build stronger operational foundations.



The microgrant allowed me to immediately implement what I was learning instead of delaying critical decisions. It gave my business momentum at exactly the right time.



That financial boost created breathing room. I was able to invest in the foundation of my business and move forward with confidence.



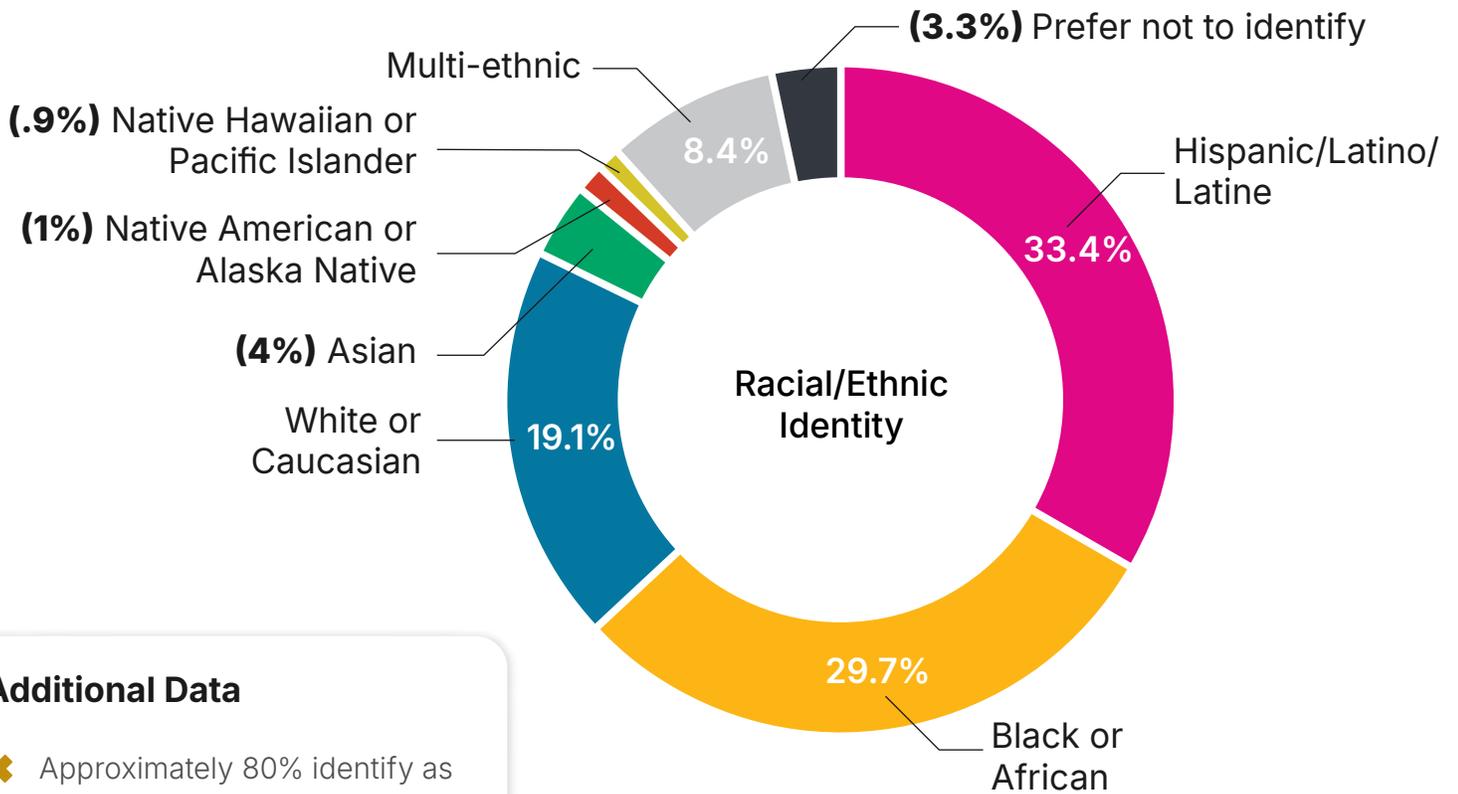
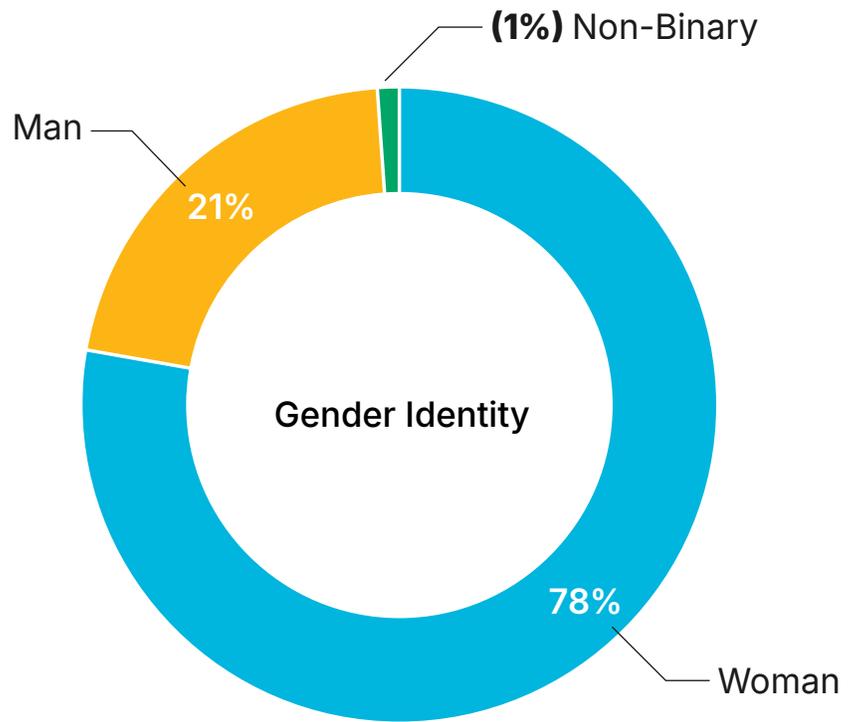
The microgrant was the catalyst that helped me turn strategy into action. It made growth feel possible instead of overwhelming.

ANALYSIS

Demographic Reach

Additional Data

- ✘ 156 Women
- ✘ 42 Men
- ✘ 2 Non-Binary

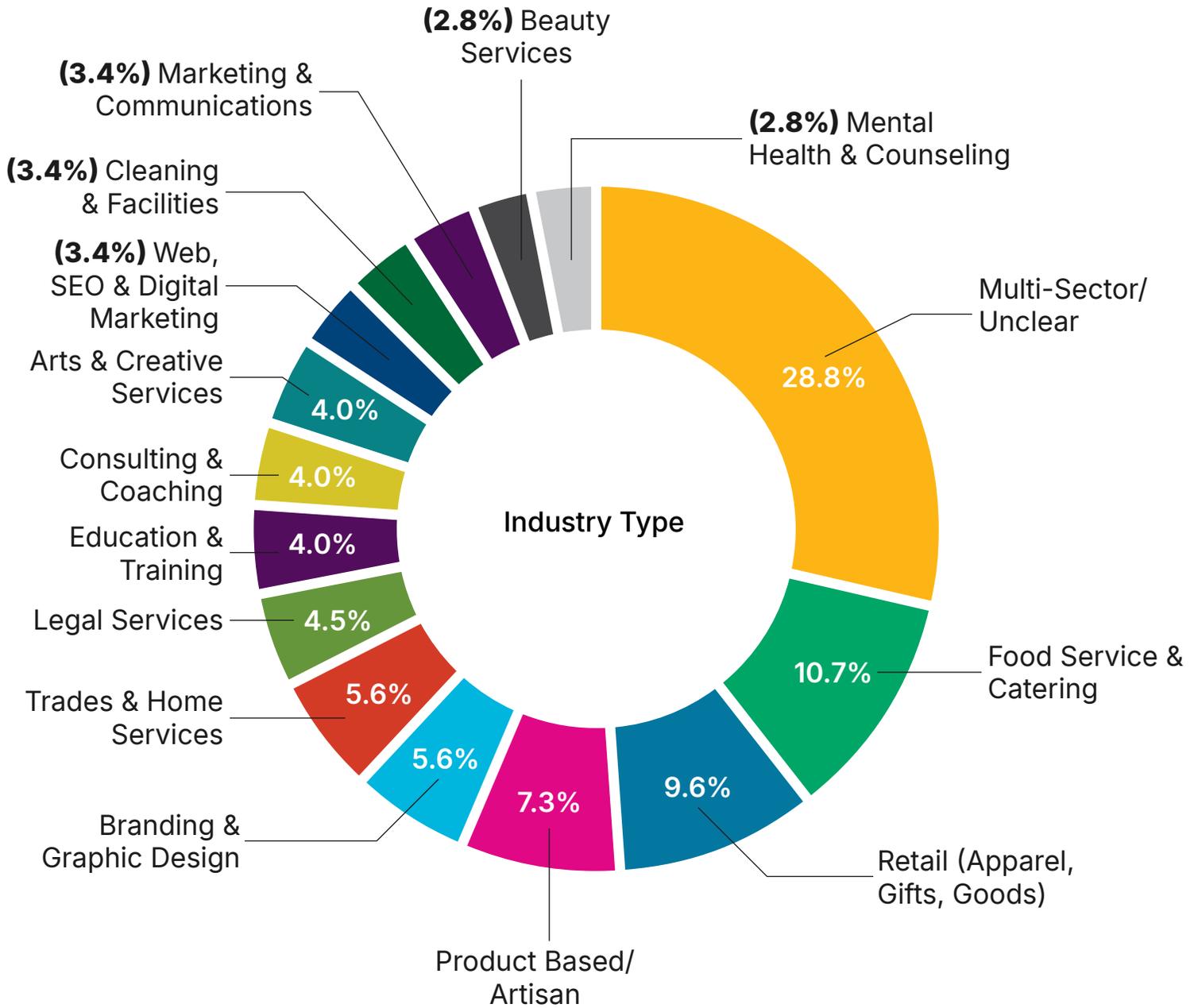


Additional Data

- ✘ Approximately 80% identify as entrepreneurs of color

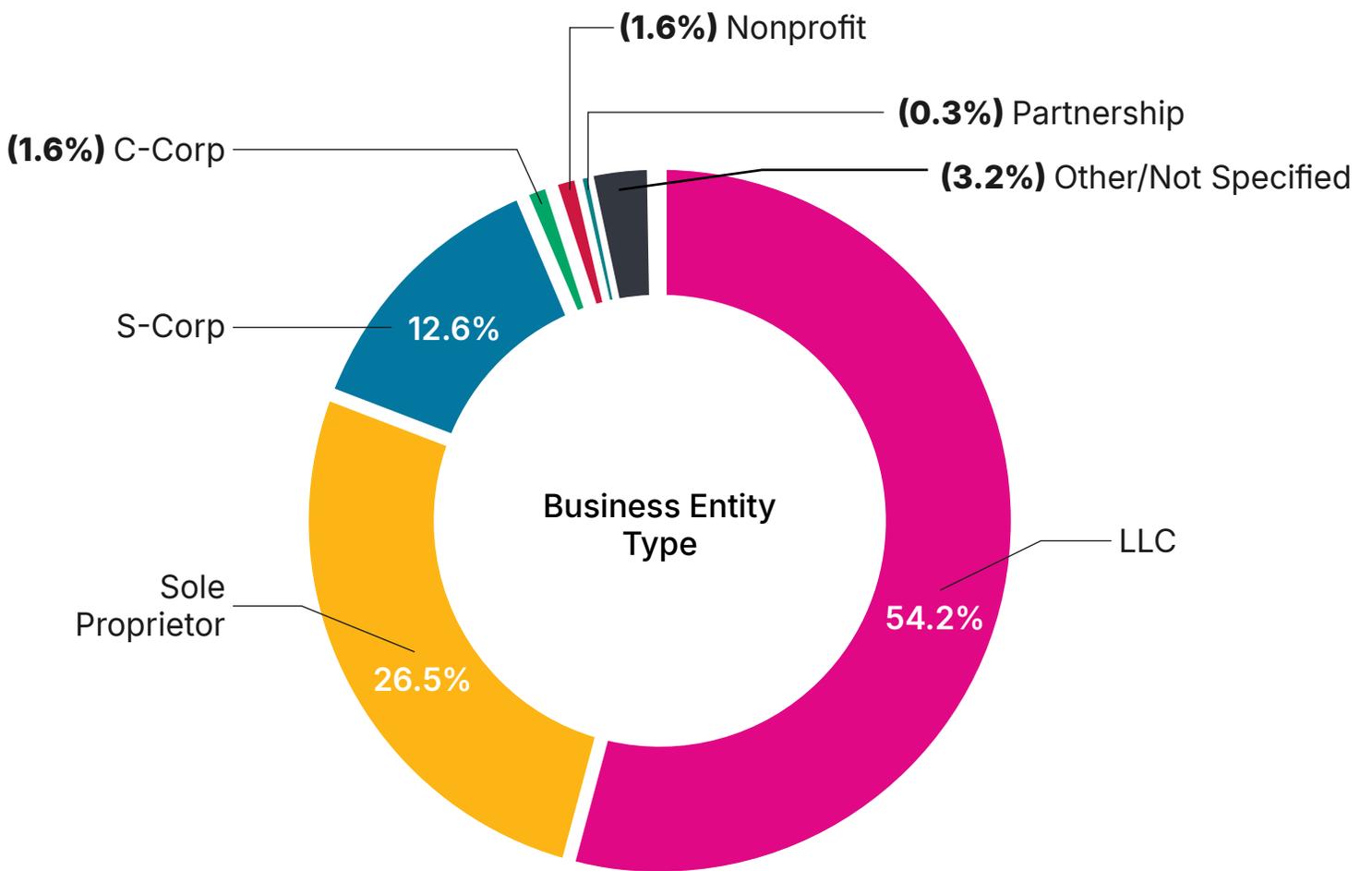
ANALYSIS

Industry



ANALYSIS

Industry



COLLABORATION

Sponsorships, Grants & Partnerships

As a 501(c)(3), BBB relies on a combination of sponsor investment, grant funding, and in-kind partner expertise to deliver high-impact programming that strengthens small businesses and local economies. Key sponsorships, partnerships, and grants included:

**Godaddy**

Funded \$195,000 in microgrants and provided digital tools, domains, and website support that strengthened online visibility and accelerated revenue-generating activity

**Desert Financial Credit Union**

A key partner whose support enabled program funding, mentorship, and education, strengthening financial readiness and capital preparedness.

**Founder Fuego**

Provided programming and guidance focused on building fundable businesses and strengthening readiness for partnerships, capital, and long-term growth

**Civic Communities**

Provided sponsorship and educational programming focused on business readiness and expanded access to lending and investment pathways

**LifeGuides**

Delivered over 600 mentorship sessions and wellbeing support focused on resilience, leadership, and sustainability

**Snell & Wilmer**

Provided legal audits and education to strengthen compliance, risk management, and operational foundations

**JPMorgan Chase**

Provided financial sponsorship and supported financial education and access to capital programming

**City of San Diego**

Provided grant funding that supported program delivery and expanded access to education, mentorship, and business resources for participating entrepreneurs



West Valley Mavericks

Provided grant funding that supported program delivery and expanded access in the Arizona West Valley to resources, networks, and community-based support for participating small business owners



SCORE

Provided expert-led mentorship and educational guidance



Evolution Room

Delivered specialized training focused on leadership development, business growth strategies, and community-centered entrepreneurship

Dozens of Subject Matter Experts

Delivered specialized training, technical assistance, and industry insight



Sponsor and partner investment is foundational to the success of the Breakthrough Suite. These contributions enable BBB to deliver high-value education, mentorship, and capital access while leveraging significant in-kind support and ensuring responsible stewardship of philanthropic and corporate dollars.

Continued investment in the Breakthrough Suite directly supports **small business growth, workforce stability, ethical leadership, and long-term economic resilience** across the region.

OVERVIEW

Ongoing Engagement and Alumni Ecosystem

A defining feature of the Breakthrough Suite is its emphasis on long-term connection and continued support. Graduates become part of an ongoing entrepreneur ecosystem that includes **alumni socials, alumni-only educational events, continued mentorship access, and cross-cohort networking opportunities.**

These intentional touchpoints allow entrepreneurs from different cohorts, regions, and industries to connect in meaningful ways, share resources, and collaborate. Sustained engagement and continued access to education and mentorship are key factors that contribute to long-term business survival and growth. This ecosystem approach is a core differentiator of the Breakthrough Suite of programs.



SUMMARY

Ethical Business Leadership

The Breakthrough Suite is grounded in BBB's commitment to advancing trust, integrity, and ethical business practices.

As a result of their participation, several graduates have gone on to become finalists and winners of **BBB Torch Awards for Ethics.** The Torch Awards represent one of BBB's highest honors and recognize businesses that demonstrate exceptional integrity, transparency, and ethical leadership through a rigorous evaluation process.

These outcomes underscore the role of the Breakthrough Suite in cultivating businesses that strengthen marketplace trust and contribute positively to their communities.



OVERVIEW

National Scaling Through the BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust

Following a highly successful pilot year, the Breakthrough Accelerator is expanding nationally through the **BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust**, extending its proven, outcomes-driven accelerator model to additional BBB regions across the country.

This national expansion builds on demonstrated results, strong program infrastructure, and alignment with BBB's mission. Through the Institute, the Breakthrough Accelerator is being implemented across multiple markets while maintaining consistency, quality, and BBB's commitment to responsible and ethical business practices.

By scaling the Breakthrough Accelerator nationally, BBB is strengthening small business ecosystems across regions and advancing ethical business leadership at scale, building on a foundation that has already produced meaningful and measurable results.



CONCLUSION

Year-End Summary

In 2025, BBB delivered a coordinated, high-impact approach to entrepreneur programming that strengthened economic resilience across service areas and demonstrated what is possible when **education, mentorship, capital, and community** are intentionally aligned. Through the Breakthrough Accelerator and Growth Surge BootCamp, BBB supported **200 small business owners** with the tools, relationships, and resources needed to build stronger, more sustainable businesses.

As this work continues to grow and evolve, BBB remains committed to **expanding access, deepening impact, and supporting entrepreneurs** who contribute meaningfully to their local economies. Continued engagement in the Breakthrough Suite represents an opportunity to strengthen small business ecosystems, advance responsible business practices, and help ensure that more entrepreneurs have the support needed to thrive long term.



HEAR FROM THE COHORT

Testimonials & Experiences



“

This course was the perfect ratio of empowerment and knowledge.

I have clear, actionable steps to follow through with to improve my business systems.

— Kali Stewart, SCEND FITNESS



“

The best part is being part of a community that cares and listens to small businesses.

...every opportunity and [tool] that BBB offers...[is] invaluable.

— Jessica Rosas, Jessica Rosas Events



“

The BBB Breakthrough Accelerator program offers an incredible platform for small business owners to grow both personally and professionally.

What sets it apart is the emphasis on real-world application and community—you're not just learning concepts, you're building connections and implementing strategies that make an immediate impact. The interactive format, peer support, and accessible resources make it a truly empowering experience.

— Medeliza Roel, Sbay Print and Design



“

The program has helped build my confidence personally, professionally, and as a budding business owner.

I began my business journey with no clear path to growth or success...[BBB Breakthrough] helped me realize that path and provided me the resources to achieve those goals.

— Doug Maushardt, Dougs Ventures

“

The energy was magnetic every week, and I found tremendous value with each of the sessions.

[My] favorite parts of the program [were] having a dedicated space to be around others who are coming in with a beginner's mindset, learning and being in the energy of a room of ambitious people.

— Kimberly Blair, The Guides Holistic Therapies



“

This program felt like the greatest gift an entrepreneur could receive.

I remember there being points in the middle of class where I felt tears coming because I was just so grateful to be in a room with such genuine, successful, giving people.

— Leslie Patino



“

It felt like a space where I could show up fully as myself.

Every session gave me something meaningful to reflect on and something practical to apply. It was more than a business program, it was a transformative experience.

— Xavi Valdez, Lambda Rising Soccer Club



“

This program was a godsend.

It has shined a light on all the areas my business is lacking. I initially wanted to leave this program selling and making more money, but what I needed was to get into the bones and foundation of my business to build it correctly so that it can sustain the success I'm seeking.

I am confident that the sales and profitability will come, now that I have finished this program. This was a priceless experience.

— Aeryonna Ware, HappyGodGirl Productions

