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CAMEO is reclaiming the California Dream - one microbusiness at a time.

CAMEO members work with every day entrepreneurs to harness their innovative ideas and creativity and empower them to become their own bosses. Microbusinesses are everywhere in California - the organic tomato farmer at the Saturday market, the childcare center at work, the technology service firm who fixes your computer when it crashes, your favorite neighborhood restaurant, or the sophisticated adult ice cream truck...

Chris Saint was recovering from spinal cord surgery. When it became clear that he couldn't return to being a private investigator, he needed to find another career. After reminiscing about ice cream trucks at a party, Chris and his wife Jennifer drew up plans for a "pimped-out truck with pinstripes and a rockin' stereo system." They took their plan to a regular bank, but didn't get very far. In fact, the bank didn't 'get it' and told the Saints that they were too much of a risk.

*They were referred to **ACCION San Diego** by a friend. The greatest thing was when the Saints presented their idea to ACCION – they 'got it' and loaned Jennifer and Chris \$35,000. They also got business management assistance. "They didn't laugh," said Jennifer. "And they went all the way with us which was so cool. During the first year, we called our counselor: 'We are struggling, we don't know what to do' and they were always supportive. We wouldn't still be here without ACCION in that first year."*

*The Sweet Treats truck mainly caters to corporate events with a menu that includes Häagen Dazs, Ben and Jerry's, Snow Cones and dog ice cream. They became so successful that they went to **CDC Small Business Finance** for a bigger loan to pay off ACCION and buy another truck. They now have three trucks and are looking at a fourth, have two employees besides themselves and hire lots of independent contractors.*

Read more [Micro Enterprise success stories](#).



CAMEO's Mission

The mission of CAMEO is to promote economic opportunity and community well-being through Micro Enterprise development.

Our members create jobs for entrepreneurs, help Main Street **businesses survive and thrive** during difficult economic times, **revitalize neighborhoods** through business development, and provide infrastructure that **strengthens families**.

Our member organizations provide entrepreneurs with small business financing such as loans and credit, technical assistance and business management training.

CAMEO is the voice for Micro Enterprise in California - expanding resources and building capacity for its member organizations.

CAMEO

- Provides information on trends, innovations, and technology to increase capacity to serve more clients and reach new markets;
- Cultivates new resources and investments to provide business services and capital to microbusinesses;
- Promotes best practices;
- Builds public awareness about the positive economic impacts of Micro Enterprise development
- Advocates at the local, state and federal level for public policies that support our industry in California.

CAMEO is California's statewide Micro Enterprise association made up of over 160 lenders, training programs, job creators, agencies and individuals dedicated to furthering Micro Enterprise development in California.

Claudia Viek has been CEO of CAMEO since 2007. Claudia has been a pioneer in both the Micro Enterprise and business incubation fields in California. She is the former Executive Director (14 years) of the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center. Renaissance is an award winning training, financing and business incubation program in San Francisco. Claudia served on the Board of the National Business Incubation Association and founded the Pacific Incubation Network of business incubators from Baja to Alaska.



California Microbusiness Means Business Creating Jobs and Economic Progress

Small businesses create the jobs.

- 4.2 million Californians employed by microbusinesses in 2007.
- 3 million microbusiness have no employees.
- Small local businesses have a multiplier effect on their local economies that is twice that of big national chains.
- Jobs are created locally.

Technical assistance is the key to success.

- Microentrepreneurs that have gone through training programs and receive technical assistance from *CAMEO members have an 80% success rate* (versus the 50-80% failure rate of small businesses that don't seek help.)
- CAMEO member clients who start their own businesses also on average *create two jobs in addition to their own*, over a three-five year period.
- If half of the 4 million microbusiness in California hired one person, we'd create 2 million jobs and solve our unemployment problem.

CAMEO businesses create jobs and generate income.

In 2009, CAMEO members served 21,000 businesses with training, technical assistance and loans. These firms, which were largely start-ups, brought *42,000 new jobs into California's economy*.

- The businesses created a total of *\$1.5 billion in economic activity*.
- For every \$3,000 in technical assistance provided, a company generates \$70,000 in sales.
- The Women's Initiative's Social Return on Investment: every \$1 invested in Women's Initiative, returns \$30 to society (local multiplier effect, more tax revenue, less government assistance, etc.)
- Federal taxes paid increased 35% over a five-year period.
- Traditionally, CAMEO members have served the emerging majority, the underserved - women, minorities and low income – or those who have high barriers to entry into the business world.
- Because of the Great Recession, CAMEO members are serving new populations - struggling Main Street businesses and unemployed who have turned entrepreneurial and are the new *free-agents*.
- An estimated 120,000 unemployed (about 5% of unemployed) are potential entrepreneurs.

