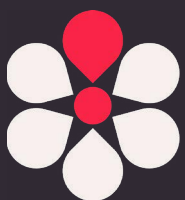




IMPACT REPORT 2025

SMALL IS POWERFUL

Pictured: Fredrick Daniels | BARCUTS Inc. | Brooklyn, NY



Start Small
Think Big

Every entrepreneur deserves
access to the expertise that helps
businesses thrive.

FROM THE DESK OF

Mabell Fernandez

Executive Director



To Our Community,

Coming back to Start Small Think Big as Executive Director feels both familiar and new. I spent nearly five years here earlier in my career, working directly with entrepreneurs and helping build new services and partnerships. During those years, I saw firsthand how much having the right expertise at the right moment can matter for a small business owner. It's a lesson that has stayed with me throughout my career.

Years later, the work in this report is a powerful reminder of why. The entrepreneurs we serve are making important decisions about their businesses—whether they're reviewing a contract, negotiating a lease, or trying to make sense of their cash flow. In those moments, having the right professional to turn to matters.

In 2025, more than **2,500 entrepreneurs** had that kind of support through Start Small. More than **1,400 attorneys, CPAs, and financial professionals** contributed their expertise pro bono, providing **\$23.9 million** in legal and financial services at no cost.

I'm grateful to the staff who made this work possible in 2025, to the attorneys, CPAs, and financial professionals who shared their expertise, and to the community partners, corporate partners, and funders who invested in it. Most of all, I'm grateful to the entrepreneurs who trusted Start Small with their businesses.

As I look ahead, I want us to make that expertise easier to reach. That starts with making it simpler for entrepreneurs to find the right professional when they need one and working more closely with community organizations that already know and serve them. It also means creating more ways for companies and professionals to put their expertise to work for small businesses. And as we expand that reach, we need to make sure our services remain strong, consistent, and able to grow with the demand for them.

I first came to Start Small nearly a decade ago in a very different role, with a lot still to learn. I return now with everything I've learned since and a deep appreciation for the opportunity to lead Start Small at this moment and help shape its future.

It's good to be back.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mabell Fernandez'.

Mabell Fernandez

Executive Director, Start Small Think Big

ABOUT START SMALL THINK BIG

Every entrepreneur deserves access to the expertise that helps businesses thrive.

Small business owners make big decisions every day, but access to trusted professional expertise too often depends on the networks and resources available to them. Start Small Think Big expands access to legal and financial expertise for entrepreneurs who might otherwise go without it. We connect business owners with experienced attorneys, CPAs, and financial professionals who contribute their expertise pro bono.

What We Do

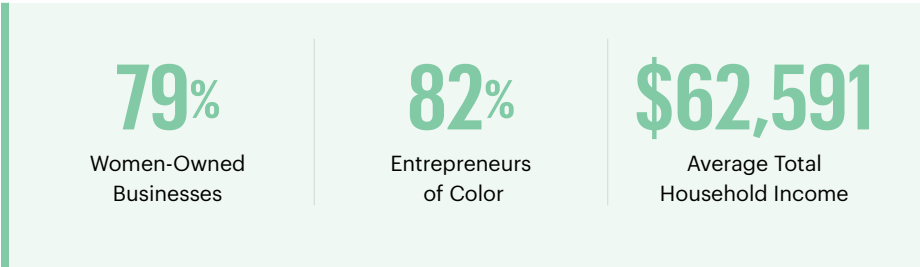
LEGAL SERVICES

Pro bono attorneys handle entity formation, contracts, commercial leases, IP, and trademarks.

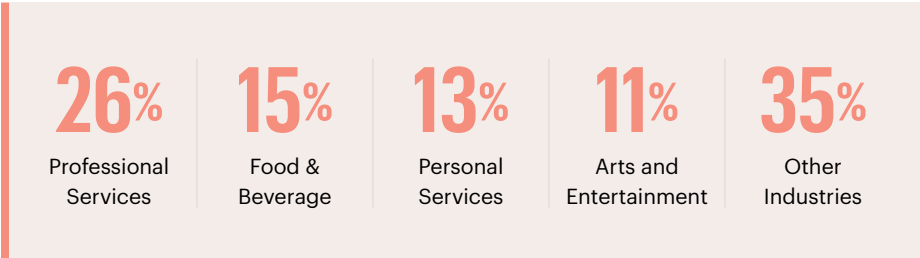
FINANCIAL SERVICES

CPAs and financial professionals help with bookkeeping setup and cleanup, tax preparation, financial modeling, cash flow, and preparing for capital.

Who We Served in 2025 (At a Glance)



Key Industries Served in 2025



“

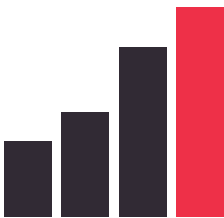
I discovered Start Small Think Big after graduating from the Goldman Sachs Black in Business program, and the legal support has been invaluable, helping me protect my intellectual property through trademarks and put essential legal protections in place for my business.”

Shequeta L. Smith
Shero Comics
Sherman Oaks, CA

OUR IMPACT

Access changes what’s possible
for entrepreneurs.

By connecting small business owners with legal and financial expertise,
we help them make informed decisions, address risks, and build stronger
foundations for their businesses.



IN 2025

\$23.9M

free business
services provided

2,508

unique entrepreneurs
reached

1,426

pro bono experts
engaged

How We Deliver Impact

One-on-One Consultations & Projects

574

entrepreneurs
connected to an
expert

1,631

business
challenges
addressed with

1,375

challenges
completed

Expert-Led Workshops

66

expert-led
workshops hosted

3,591

total workshop
attendees

90%

gained knowledge
they could apply to
their business

Foundations of Business Resilience

\$

FINANCIAL
RESILIENCE

The financial clarity to make
informed decisions and sustain
a healthy business

- Prepare for capital access
- Understand financial performance
- Manage cash flow and expenses

+

⚖️

LEGAL
RESILIENCE

The legal protection to
reduce risk and operate with
confidence.

- Establish appropriate legal structures
- Draft and strengthen contracts
- Identify and address legal risks

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🧩

STRONGER,
MORE RESILIENT
BUSINESSES

Create jobs, generate
income, and build wealth for
entrepreneurs, employees, and
communities

startsmallthinkbig.org

4

Entrepreneur Feature



“
Big visions
become real
through small,
consistent steps.

” STACI

Staci Sherri

Suhuyini Skincare & Tribal Travel Club

Long Beach, CA

with Start Small since 2024

BUSINESS VISION & MISSION

Suhuyini Skincare is a clean, culturally rooted beauty brand inspired by Northern Ghana and created to honor Staci's African heritage. The name Suhuyini translates to “One heart—a person who keeps her promise.”

The brand blends ancestral wisdom with modern, luxurious body care, offering products designed to care for the skin while uplifting the traditions that inspire them. Alongside Suhuyini Skincare, Staci curates cultural experiences across the continent through her parallel venture, Tribal Travel Club.

START SMALL PARTNERSHIP

As Staci navigated a major rebrand, she connected with Start Small Think Big for financial guidance and business strategy:

- **Expert-Led Workshop:** Staci attended Start Small's Cash Flow Strategies for Small Business Success workshop with Pursuit Lending, learning how to anticipate cash flow needs and plan capital investments.
- **Project-Based Service:** Start Small connected Staci with a pro bono expert in consumer goods and product strategy. Over several months, they worked together to build a financial roadmap and prepare the business for expansion.

THE PATH FORWARD

With a clearer financial roadmap in place, Staci is preparing Suhuyini Skincare for its next stage of growth. Start Small connected her with pro bono legal experts to support her trademark registration and establish formal contracts, giving her a stronger foundation as she continues to build the business.

Entrepreneur Feature



“

Start Small Think Big has been the most essential partner for Coqui the Chef for nearly a decade... I can always say they've had my back.

” TANIA

Tania Lopez

Coqui the Chef

Bronx, NY

with Start Small since 2016

BUSINESS VISION & MISSION

A lifelong Bronx resident, Tania founded Coqui the Chef to address the lack of healthy food options in her neighborhood. What began as a youth culinary and nutrition education initiative has since evolved into a small business.

Today, Coqui the Chef offers immersive cooking classes rooted in Latin and global traditions for corporate clients, alongside an e-commerce platform offering retail products.

START SMALL PARTNERSHIP

Over a nearly decade-long partnership, Start Small Think Big has connected Tania with dozens of experts across legal, financial, and other business challenges as the needs of her business have evolved. In 2025, that ongoing partnership included:

- **Corporate Governance:** When Tania needed guidance on a corporate governance matter, Start Small connected her with pro bono legal experts at law firm partner Dechert to help her navigate the issue and determine the right path forward.
- **Expert-Led Workshop:** Tania attended Start Small's Running a Small Business in the Age of AI: Legal Risks and Responsible Practices workshop, hosted in partnership with Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, Fordham University School of Law, and the Harlem Community Development Corporation, to better understand how to use emerging technology while protecting her business.

THE PATH FORWARD

Nearly a decade into her relationship with Start Small, Tania continues to evolve Coqui the Chef. As the business changes and new needs arise, Start Small remains a source of legal and financial expertise she can turn to along the way.

THANK YOU

To the individuals, companies, and foundations whose support made our work possible in 2025!

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* Start Small entrepreneur alumni

Looking Forward

In 2026, we're focused on reaching more entrepreneurs with the legal and financial expertise that can make a difference for their businesses. Three priorities are guiding that work:

1. BRING EXPERTISE CLOSER TO ENTREPRENEURS

Build deeper relationships with community organizations that already serve entrepreneurs, making it easier for business owners to connect with the legal and financial support they need.

2. EXPAND OUR NETWORK OF EXPERTS

Grow our network of attorneys, CPAs, and financial professionals by deepening corporate partnerships and creating more ways for professionals to contribute their expertise pro bono.

3. MAKE ACCESS EASIER AND MORE RESPONSIVE

Strengthen the systems behind our services so entrepreneurs can get to the right expertise faster.

GET INVOLVED

Every entrepreneur deserves access to professional expertise. Here's how you can help make it accessible.

FUND THIS WORK ➤

Your investment expands access to legal and financial expertise for more entrepreneurs.

[STARTSMALLTHINKBIG.ORG/DONATE](https://startsmallthinkbig.org/donate)

SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE ➤

Attorneys and financial professionals can contribute pro bono expertise to help entrepreneurs navigate real business challenges.

[STARTSMALLTHINKBIG.ORG/VOLUNTEER](https://startsmallthinkbig.org/volunteer)

BUILD A CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP ➤

Engage your firm's people, resources, or investment to expand access to professional expertise.

[STARTSMALLTHINKBIG.ORG/CSR](https://startsmallthinkbig.org/csr)

REFER AN ENTREPRENEUR ➤

Know a business owner navigating a legal or financial challenge? Refer them to Start Small.

[STARTSMALLTHINKBIG.ORG/APPLY](https://startsmallthinkbig.org/apply)

ACCOUNTABILITY

AUDITED BY:

Rich and Bander, LLP

CHARITY NAVIGATOR:

★★★★
Four-Star Rated

CANDID SEAL:

Platinum Transparency
2026

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