

GSBI Programs: Frequently Asked Questions

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1. APPLICATION

For FAQs related to completing the application form, please take a look at the [first page of the application](#).

2. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Q: Who should apply to the Women's Economic Empowerment Global Social Benefit Institute (GSBI®) program?

We encourage social enterprises to apply if they:

- *Are committed to women's economic empowerment*
- *Address the needs of those living in poverty*
- *Can provide financial documentation and other business planning documents*

Q: My organization is a non-profit enterprise - do I qualify?

It depends. Non-profit, for-profit, or hybrid social enterprises that have a clear commitment to and a pathway toward an earned revenue model with the potential for scale are all encouraged to apply.

Q: How is "women's economic empowerment" defined?

Miller Center defines women's economic empowerment as a 360 degree or North-South-East-West approach to targeting women. This means supporting social enterprises with women as leaders, employees, customers/users/beneficiaries, and value chain contributors.

Q: How is a "gender lens strategy" defined?

Miller Center defines gender lens strategy as social enterprises with:

- 1) *women-owned or -led teams*
- 2) *products or services that substantially improve the lives of women and girls*
- 3) *a focus on workplace equity in staffing, management, and boardroom representation*
- 4) *a focus on workplace equity along their supply chains*

Q: In early 2020, Miller Center had a "Women-Led" cohort. What is the difference and why the shift?

We believe there is much value to having a cohort focused on social enterprises that are led by women. However, widening the applicant pool to include social enterprises with a clear strategy for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, is a more robust approach to helping solve the [UN Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 5](#).

Q: Is there a geography focus for this program?

No, the program is global and social enterprises operating all over the world are welcome to apply. However, the program is delivered in English so a strong command of the English language is required.

Q: What is the relationship between Santa Clara University, Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship, and the GSBI?

Housed at Santa Clara University in Silicon Valley, Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship is a center of distinction founded to connect the University's mission, values, and resources to the global community. GSBI accelerator programs are run out of Miller Center, and support social enterprises around the world through executive-level mentorship and robust programming.

Q: What are the deadlines for applying to a GSBI accelerator program?

To be considered for the Women's Economic Empowerment GSBI Online cohort, applications must be submitted by December 1, 2020. Interested applicants can sign up for the [Miller Center newsletter](#) to receive updates on all GSBI cohort dates and application deadlines. Please also check our website for cohort key dates.

Q: My enterprise is not yet operational - can I still apply?

GSBI's programs are designed to best serve social enterprises that have already begun to operate, meaning that you have begun to sell your product and/or service. Earlier stage enterprises who are still in the idea stage are too early to be accepted.

Q: My enterprise does not directly address poverty - can I still apply?

It depends. GSBI programs are designed for social entrepreneurs that directly serve people living in poverty. Social enterprises with B2B (business-to-business) models that serve other social enterprises (for example through technology platforms) are eligible for GSBI and are invited to apply and have been highly successful in previous GSBI programs. Fundraising platforms are generally not a good fit for GSBI. Also, organizations that measure their primary impact with environmental metrics (as opposed to social impact metrics) are unlikely to be accepted.

Q: Can other people from my team participate in the program?

The main participant should be someone in a leadership role (ex: CEO, Executive Director, COO) who has a strong understanding of the business and the authority to make strategic decisions on behalf of the enterprise. Other members from your team are encouraged to engage where it makes sense to be involved (for example, they oversee the financials or marketing of your business). We encourage multiple participants, but rely on one main point person to manage the engagement.



Q: Do you provide funding to entrepreneurs?

Miller Center does not provide any funding to entrepreneurs. Our goal is to get the entrepreneur investment-ready and support connections to impact investors.

Q: How much does the program cost?

There is no cost for participating in the programs. All costs are covered by the fundraising efforts of Miller Center.

Q: What is the time commitment for entrepreneurs?

It varies, but the time commitment is generally 3-4 hours per week.

Q: Do social entrepreneurs receive investment after participating in GSBI?

Often. Most [GSBI alumni](#) go on to receive funding either in the form of debt, equity, or grants. GSBI programs are designed to help social enterprises validate their business models, develop a strong justifiable ask (investment amount, type of capital, intended use of funds, return on investment, and expected impact), and develop the diligence and communications materials required for investment so the entrepreneur is confidently able to approach investors that will help them get to that next stage of growth.

Q: I currently have a full time job and am running my social enterprise on the side. Can I still apply?

Yes. If your enterprise program meets all of the eligibility criteria and you are committed to being an active participant (if selected into a GSBI program). However, most participants are those whose full-time focus is running their social enterprise.

Q: What will you gain from participating in GSBI?

If selected into one of our programs, you will come out of the GSBI with a thorough understanding of your business model and your expected social impact, a really clear financial ask, all under the guidance of executive-level mentorship. In addition, you will be connected with a global network of social entrepreneurs, foundations, and impact investors.

3. MENTORSHIP

Q: Who are the mentors?

The mentors are carefully selected business executives who have demonstrated strong business acumen as well as values and skills that enable effective mentorship (trusting, honest, listening, supportive). They are high-caliber individuals who are considered trusted advisors by our social entrepreneurs and team. Each SE is paired with two to three mentors for the program duration (4-6 months). Many of them may not know your specific context or have experience in your industry, but all of them are experienced with running businesses, managing growth and risk, building teams and boards, and are skilled in asking the right questions that will help you grow your abilities as a leader.

If you would like to learn more, please [visit our Mentor webpage](#).

Q: How many mentors will I work with - do I work with the same mentor for the duration of the program?

You will be assigned two or three mentors to work with you weekly for the duration of the program. If you need more specific support, they may pull in other content experts to work with your team.

Q: How will I be paired with mentors?

We pair each team with a mentor based on your organizational needs and the expertise of our mentors.

Q: More Questions?

Join us for an informational Q&A webinar. Click below to register:

- [Tuesday, November 10 @ 3:30 pm PST](#)
- [Monday, November 23 @ 7:30 am PST](#)

You may also email us at: gsbi@scu.edu

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