

REI CO-OP  
PATH AHEAD  
VENTURES

# SOBAN

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At REI Co-op, we exist to inspire and enable life outside **for everyone.**

The health and vibrancy of the outdoor industry depends on the **economic mobility** and **contributions of diverse communities**, both as **creators** and as **customers.**

When more founders of color succeed, it **propels the industry forward** and the outdoor community becomes **stronger** and **healthier as a whole.**

# What founders are seeking

Listening sessions with founders identified needs for emerging brands highlighted strong interest in REI as a partner in their journey



**Mentorship**



**Production  
& Distribution**



**Cashflow**



**Network**



**Credibility**

## OUR MISSION

**REI Co-op's Path Ahead Ventures accelerates the success of founders of color, to unlock the full potential of outdoor community.**

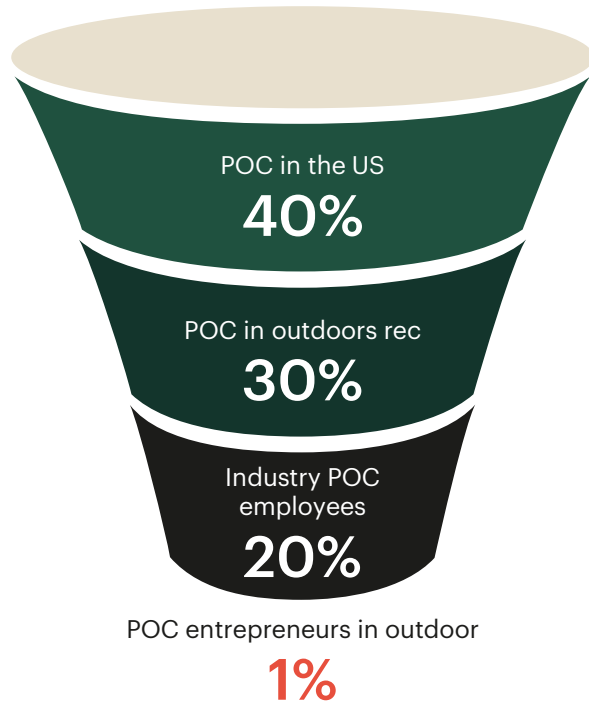
We offer full-spectrum support to Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, and Asian American and Pacific Islander-owned and -led startups. Path Ahead Ventures is designed with the belief that when more founders of color succeed, we propel the industry and communities forward.



# Overview

## Problem

Ownership doesn't reflect who is in the outdoors



## Plan

Annual funding and support, comprised of:

<b>Embark Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>15-25</b> Early-stage Companies</li><li>• <b>\$10K</b> Equity-free Grants</li></ul>	<b>300+</b> Founders of color impacted	<b>1000</b> Mentors and experts
<b>Navigate Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>4-8</b> Emerging companies</li><li>• <b>\$25K</b> Equity-free Grants</li><li>• <b>\$100K</b> Optional Equity Investments</li></ul>		
<b>Direct Investments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5-10</b> Growing companies</li><li>• <b>\$200-\$300k</b> Equity Investments</li></ul>	<b>15%</b> Of Brands at REI	<b>\$30M</b> Invested

## Impact

By 2030:

# Progress So Far

Since launching in October 2021, we have run Embark twice, Navigate twice, and invested in 6 companies directly.

70

Founders

22

States where Founders are based

250

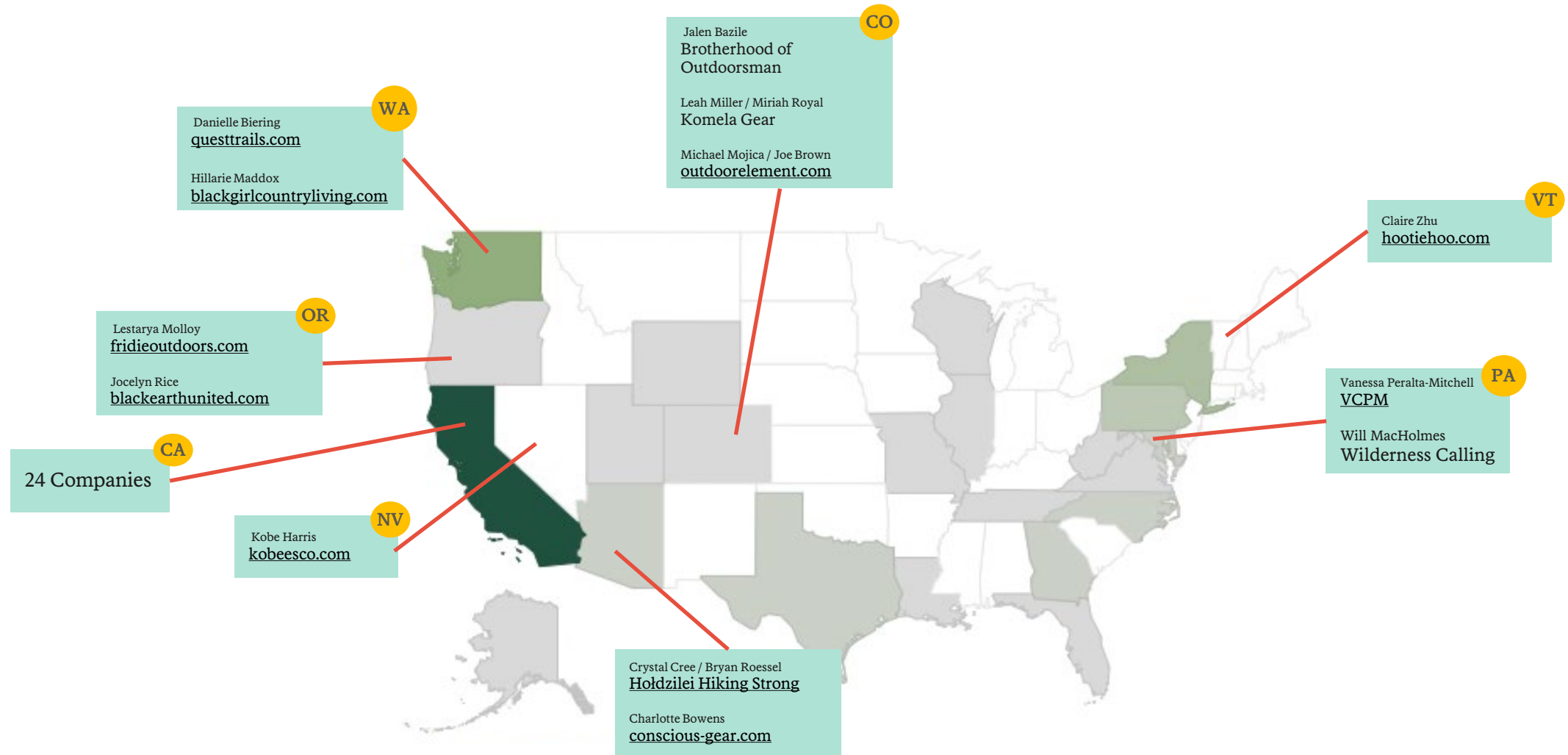
Mentors and experts

\$3.1M

Distributed



# Founders in SOBAN States



# Founder Spotlight

[itacatefoods.com](https://itacatefoods.com)  
[Mini Documentary @YouTube](#)



**Martha Y Diaz** SHE/HER

**Embark 2022**

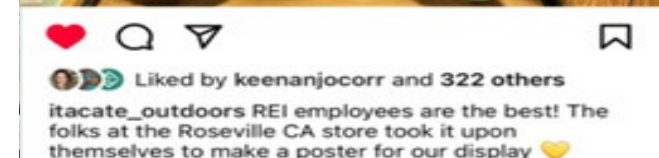
Located in Sacramento, CA

## Program Benefits

- Sense of community
- Confidence
- Inspiration from mentors
- Network of like-minded founders
- Foothold in the outdoor industry
- Concrete business guidance

## Outcomes Post Program

- Successful crowdfunding campaign
- -Worked with REI Co-op Studios on short film about her story
- -Launch event with REI community partner Latinxhikers
- -Initial sales in local REI stores
- -Panelist for PAV at Outdoor Retailer





# How can you help?

## Founder and Brand Recommendations

- You have strong ties to your communities and state ecosystems Kindly **share recommendations** for aspiring Embark founders, Navigate-ready companies, and candidates for Fund investment.

## Spread the Word

- Share the Path Ahead Ventures video where and when appropriate; follow our founders on social media, repost when inspired;  
\*\* UPCOMING \*\* **Embark 2024 Application opens [September 8<sup>th</sup>](#)**

## Founder Consultations and Resources

- Our founders have broad needs for **information, guidance, and networking** from subject matter experts and knowledgeable resources. Let us know if you'd be up for occasional 30 minute 1:1s, or providing to our content and program curriculum.

## Funding and Local Support Programs

- **Looking for partners in your state**  
We would love to hear your ideas on how our founders could engage with **your state's organizations, programs, and opportunities**. Founders thrive when well-connected to the local environment.

# Reach and Follow Path Ahead Ventures



More information about us and programs:

<https://www.rei.com/path-ahead>

Inspirational videos:

[Path Ahead Ventures Playlist on YouTube](#)

*(under the main REI YouTube presence)*

Recommending brands:

Send through to [pathaheadventures@rei.com](mailto:pathaheadventures@rei.com) for review and potential follow up

For other thoughts + connections:

Send through to [dkihany@rei.com](mailto:dkihany@rei.com) for review and potential follow up

Kindly fill us in on any context from prior interactions. The more background we have, the better we can identify and align opportunities.

**Thank You!**

