

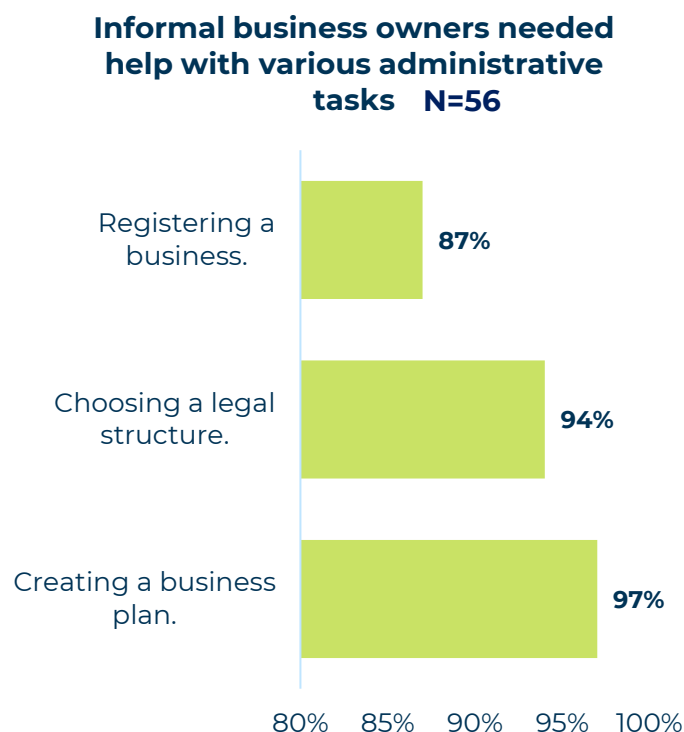
FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION: EMPOWERING LATINA ENTREPRENEURS IN MINNESOTA

Business Planning/Research and Evaluation Findings

What we did

HACER conducted a survey of 56 Latina entrepreneurs in Minnesota who at one point had an informal business. Half the respondents currently had an informal business while the other half had been informal in the past but have since successfully formalized their business. Additionally, HACER conducted interviews with 13 entrepreneurs and eight experts in the field to learn about the role of business planning in the formalization process.

What we learned



Entrepreneurs expressed a strong desire for assistance in various areas of business establishment based on survey responses. The majority of respondents indicated a need for help in crafting a business plan, seeking guidance on selecting a suitable legal structure, and a need for support in the business registration process. These findings underscore a significant interest and demand among participants for learning crucial aspects of business foundation, starting with developing a comprehensive business plan.

Effective planning is a critical element for business success.

Experts interviewed emphasized that while many new business owners tend to execute their business without thorough planning, even a small amount of planning can significantly impact the success of their businesses. Some individuals may succeed without planning, while others who plan may struggle with execution. This underscores the importance of not only creating a business plan but also effectively following through with its execution. Proper planning helps anticipate potential challenges and prepare adequately, thereby increasing the likelihood of business success.

"The first step is to develop a business plan, even if it's just a few pages. This helps you understand your strengths and weaknesses as an entrepreneur and identify where you want to focus your efforts."

– Expert Interview

"The initial process always starts with a business plan. It's essential for people to invest time in this plan. A business plan helps outline not just what services to offer but also details such as design specifics and the type of services provided. It guides the financial strategy, ensuring you focus on necessary resources and avoid unnecessary expenses. A disciplined approach to defining and focusing on your services or products through a business plan is crucial for financial stability and business growth."

– Expert Interview

Success in entrepreneurship is often a result of cumulative small successes.

Experts highlighted that success is a step-by-step process, requiring a disciplined mindset and realistic goal setting. Entrepreneurs should break down their goals into achievable steps, such as setting quarterly objectives. Flexibility and discipline are key to maintaining progress and ensuring that each small success contributes to the larger goal. By focusing on incremental achievements entrepreneurs can build a strong foundation for long-term success.

Understanding the legal and structural aspects of formalizing a business is essential for its development.

Interviewees emphasized the importance of registering with the Secretary of State's office and determining the appropriate legal entity. Additionally, opening a business bank account, securing necessary licenses or permits, and developing a marketing plan are vital steps. These actions not only provide legal protection but also help in creating a credible and structured business framework. Formalizing the business

lays the groundwork for sustainable operations, access to financial resources, and the ability to grow and scale effectively.

Community-informed workshops

Aims	Objectives
The objective of this workshop was to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the significance of business development and formalization, emphasizing both the benefits and responsibilities. Participants learned about the importance of a business plan, including its essential components, and how to apply this knowledge to their own ventures.	Importance of business plan
	Outline an initial business plan
	Understand a business and its potential

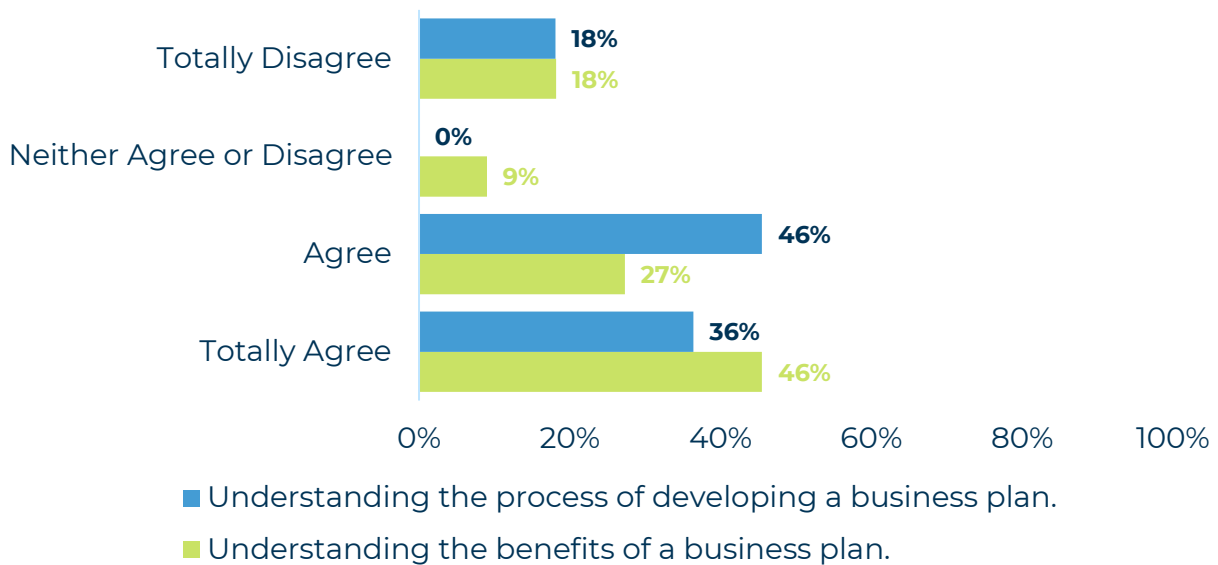
Workshop content

The workshop emphasized the importance of a well-crafted business plan, serving as a roadmap for ventures and guiding investment decisions. Participants learned how the plan acts as a persuasive tool for securing financing and communicates the business' purpose, vision, and operational details. Essential components like defining resources, operational aspects, and marketing strategies were highlighted for business success and sustainability. Practical advice on acquiring inputs, securing business insurance, seeking financing, and obtaining general business assistance was provided. The workshop also facilitated discussion among participants to foster a supportive network among Latina entrepreneurs.

Outcomes from participating in the workshops

The evaluation of the workshop on business planning revealed an enhanced understanding and awareness of the role and benefits of business planning, as well as the process involved. Most participants reported that their comprehension of the benefits of a business plan improved because of the workshop (71%). The hands-on component of the workshop enabled participants to develop an initial/mock business plan, and most of the participants reported improved understanding of the process of developing a business plan because of the activity (82%). This interactive approach provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of business plan development.

Most participants report improved understanding of both the benefits and process of developing a business plan (n=11).



Furthermore, the workshop fostered the perception that a business plan is valuable for business development, with 67% of participants finding it very valuable and 33% considering it valuable.

