



AWBC: Valdez Progress Report

Valdez Business Program – Q3 2025 Progress Report

*Prepared by the Alaska Women's Business Center (AWBC), operated by Business Impact Northwest
In partnership with the City of Valdez Economic Development Department*

Date: October 15, 2025

Executive Summary

From **July through September 2025**, the Alaska Women's Business Center (AWBC) and **Business Impact Northwest (BINW)** expanded entrepreneurial capacity in Valdez through hands-on training, one-on-one coaching, and statewide visibility opportunities. Throughout Q3, AWBC supported approximately **50 Valdez-area entrepreneurs** through a mix of in-person and virtual coaching, workshops, and community events—representing nearly **100 points of engagement** across the quarter. This reflects increased accessibility, visibility, and trust in AWBC's no-cost business support model.

This report provides a **Q3 progress snapshot (July–September 2025)**. Year-to-date and cumulative data will be compiled after Q4 for inclusion in the **2025 Annual Report**.

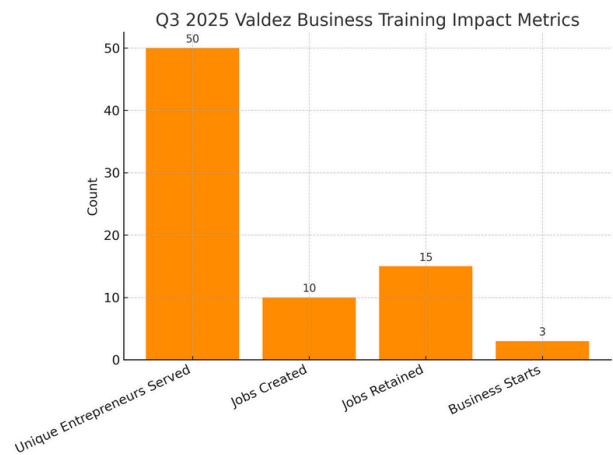
Two milestones defined the quarter:

1. **National recognition** through the *AWBC Media Spotlight Tour* hosted in Valdez — a first for the community, positioning Valdez entrepreneurs on a national platform alongside other leading small-business ecosystems across the country.
2. **The city's first full Alaska Entrepreneurship Week**, delivered in partnership with the City of Valdez Economic Development Department.

These events not only brought attention to the City's growing business sector but also elevated the voices of local entrepreneurs, showcasing Valdez as a model for how small, remote communities can drive innovation and self-reliance.

Quarter Highlights

- AWBC National Media Spotlight Tour hosted at Valdez City Council Chambers
- 25 participants in Business Builder Workshops (Valdez Civic Center)
- 15 attendees at Next Chapter Mixer (Valdez Brewing) bringing together locals interested in buying and selling businesses.
- 12 in-person, one-on-one coaching sessions completed
- 4 participants in *Square One: Work for Yourself* (Valdez Library)
- Delivery of the Poor Betty’s custom-built food truck purchased with SBA Loan via AWBC
- 3 new local businesses launched: **Treasures Boutique, Sam’s Spot, Sky’s Skin Studio**
- Valdez teams earned **2nd, 3rd, and People’s Choice Awards** at Techstars Startup Weekend



Direct Program Impact

Metric	Q3 Result	Notes
Entrepreneurs Served	50+	Across workshops and coaching
Jobs Created	10+	Primarily food and wellness sectors
Trainings Delivered	8	Including Alaska Entrepreneurship Week + Media Tour
New Businesses	3	Year-round ventures
Capital Accessed	\$100K+	SBA and private lending combined
Retail Building Tours with Clients	4	Seeking shared space for retail, events & community programs
Childcare Provider Clients	1	Meeting regularly to develop business plan

Major Events & Partnerships

AWBC Media Spotlight Tour (July 28–31)

Hosted at Valdez City Council Chambers, the Media Spotlight Tour brought national attention to the city's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Valdez was one of only five rural communities nationwide selected for the feature, highlighting how small-city innovation can thrive through partnership and resource sharing.

The event featured **Jessica Sunseri of Poor Betty's Food Truck** and recognized the collective achievements of Valdez entrepreneurs who have participated in AWBC coaching and training programs. AWBC also invited Celeste Addison of The Gift Shop, Olivia Selanoff of Quad Shot Coffee and Kristi Silkett and Candice Huff of Sugarbear Daycare to share their stories with the media. **Anchorage Daily News** and **KBNA** attended via Zoom. The event strengthened relationships among AWBC, the City, and partners including **Discover Valdez** and the **Business Women of Valdez Meetup Group**.

Alaska Entrepreneurship Week (Sept 29–Oct 3)

Included:

- Business Builder Workshops – City EDD hosted at Valdez Civic Center
- Workforce Housing Needs Assessment – City EDD & Agnew Beck
- AI Marketing Workshop – Jen Christensen of Spark Story AI Marketers
- Next Level Business Masterclass - Allan Caraway of Focal Point Consulting
- Free Bookkeeping Q&A - Logan of Dane Consulting
- Free Business Coaching - AWBC, Focal Point Consulting
- Next Chapter Mixer – Valdez Brewing
- Square One Workshop – AWBC hosted at Valdez Library
- Community Business Crawl – local business showcase
- 100+ Statewide online training and networking opportunities: akew.org
- Podcast interview with KVAK Radio to promote local City EDD trainings

Startup Ecosystem Momentum: Techstars Startup Weekend

Valdez entrepreneurs delivered their strongest performance yet—earning **2nd place, 3rd place, and People's Choice Awards** at Techstars Startup Weekend 2025.

This event expanded access to Techstars' global network of mentors and investors and strengthened collaboration between Valdez and Anchorage innovators—positioning Valdez as a **rural innovation hub** for tourism, recreation, and technology.

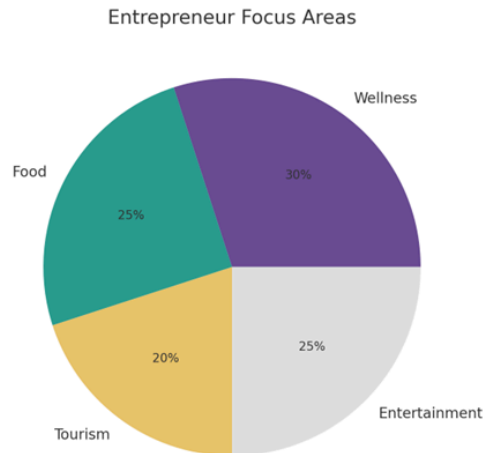
Valdez Outcomes:

- Largest participation in event history
- 3 teams earned statewide awards
- Focus areas: family tourism apps, outdoor recreation tech, and cultural storytelling

- Follow-up coaching underway to explore launch funding

Insights & Observations

- Growing under-30 cohort focused on wellness, creative, and community ventures
- Shift from competition to collaboration among business owners
- Legacy entrepreneurs mentoring new founders
- Key barriers: childcare, scheduling, tech literacy, and housing shortages
- Nearly all businesses need stronger digital readiness (Google profiles, AI tools)
- Workforce housing continues to limit expansion opportunities



Conversations Shaping Valdez's Business Future

AWBC continues to lead community-wide conversations that align with the City's economic priorities, connecting individual business support with system-level growth. Topics include:

- Business plan development and licensing guidance
- Lending readiness and access to capital
- Financial literacy and cash-flow forecasting
- Digital marketing and AI adoption
- Workforce housing and childcare as economic infrastructure
- Succession planning for legacy businesses
- Collaboration among under-30 entrepreneurs
- Balancing employment with entrepreneurship
- Building confidence and mentorship among legacy and new owners

Valdez Business Environment

- **Legacy Transitions:** Harris Sand & Gravel, Acres Kwiktrip, and Eagle's Rest RV Park for sale/sold in 2025
- **New Entrants:** Sam's Spot, Sky's Skin Studio, and Treasures Boutique among others
- **Trend:** Shift toward year-round, locally focused ventures in food, wellness, and entertainment sectors
- Average AWBC Client in Valdez is under the age of 40 and seeking retail space or property to develop into a multi-use building
- Very low client awareness of large-scale business opportunities, tech-focused business opportunities and government contracting
- Childcare Grant Program and technical assistance is proving effective for the participating business; outreach may encourage more participants

Recommendations for Q4 and Beyond

- Continue quarterly workshops and mixers in partnership with the City
- Support business plan development for local entrepreneurs seeking to build a shared workspace pilot to provide space for service-based businesses in the wellness and creative industries
- Offer childcare support to increase access to workshops
- Deliver "Digital Basics + AI for Business" training
- Advance workforce housing collaboration with City and Agnew Beck
- Work with the Valdez Consortium Library to provide business resources that are available through the statewide library system; AWBC regularly recommends clients access databases, business plans, books and research services through local libraries.

Acknowledgements

The Alaska Women's Business Center thanks:

- City of Valdez Economic Development Department
- Discover Valdez
- Prince William Sound College
- KVAK Radio
- Agnew Beck Consulting
- And all Valdez entrepreneurs helping to build a stronger, more connected local economy.

Featured Photos



- AWBC Media Spotlight Tour — Valdez City Council Chambers**
Jessica Sunseri of Poor Betty's Food Truck featured during national press coverage.



Alaska Women's Business Center Visit to Valdez

Event Schedule
July 28-31, 2025





Mon July 28	Drop-in Coaching Clinics • Business Women of Valdez Workshop & Meetup 10:30 AM-1:00 PM (Coaching), 5:30-6:30 PM (Workshop) • Optional Social Hour at Valdez Consortium Library • Valdez Brewing
Tues July 29	Drop-in Coaching Clinics • "Square One: Work for Yourself" Workshop 10:30 AM-1:00 PM (Coaching), 5:30-6:30 PM (Workshop) at Valdez Consortium Library
Wed July 30	AWBC Media Spotlight Event (Hosted by AWBC & AWBC National Tour) 12:00-1:00 PM at City Council Chambers
Thurs July 31	Reserved for 1:1 Client Coaching and Community Check-ins Call or text 907-531-2215 to schedule your appointment today!





- July Lineup of AWBC Local Business Support**



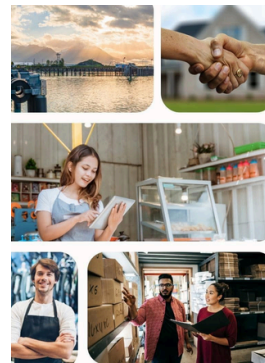
Square One
Your Gateway to Coaching,
Capital & Classes!

In Person | No Cost

THURSDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2025
At 10 AM - 11:30 AM
Valdez Consortium Library AV Room



- Alaska Entrepreneurship Week — Business Builder Workshops, Coaching, Open Houses
Hands-on strategy sessions and resource networking.



Next Chapter
Buy a Business. Sell a Business.
Succeed.

- 5:30 PM Short presentation on opportunities & resources to buy/sell a business
- Door prizes & networking

Wednesday, Oct. 1st
5:00PM - 6:30PM

FREE EVENT

ALASKA ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK '25
SEPT 23 - OCT 3

- Next Chapter Mixer — Valdez Brewing
Succession planning and peer mentorship conversations among local business owners.



- Techstars Startup Weekend Anchorage
Valdez teams earned 2nd, 3rd, and People's Choice Awards for tourism and recreation startups.



Blog Posts & Media Coverage

- **AWBC Media Spotlight Tour Announcement** <https://businessimpactnw.org/valdez-businesses-shine-in-national-spotlight-tour/>
- <https://omgculture.com/2025/08/10/awbc-national-tour-women-owned-businesses/>
Valdez recognized nationally for women-led entrepreneurship and innovation.
- **Valdez Entrepreneurship Week** <https://www.valdezak.gov/businessbuilder>
Celebrating the first full Alaska Entrepreneurship Week held in Valdez.
- **Poor Betty's Success Story** <https://businessimpactnw.org/poor-bettys/>
A local food truck's journey from startup to statewide recognition.
- **KVAK Radio Feature on Women Entrepreneurs** <https://www.kvakradio.com/episode/kvak-gets-a-sneak-peek-of-workshop-presenters/>
Local broadcast highlighting Valdez's growing small-business community.
- **Techstars Alaska Tourism Feature** <https://www.akbizmag.com/featured/techstars-startup-weekend-focuses-on-tourism/>
Info on the event where Valdez innovators made a statewide impact at Techstars.