

Advocacy Milestones



More Than 25 Years of Achievements

Since 1991, AEO has endeavored to create economic opportunities for underserved entrepreneurs. This list highlights AEO's advocacy accomplishments.

- 1991** – Association for Enterprise Opportunity is founded by a national group of micro enterprise development organizations
- 1991** – Drafted and worked to pass the original, five-year pilot Microloan program as part of the FY1992 Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Bill
- 1992** – Microloan program becomes operational and begins providing capital
- 1993** – Worked with then Congressmen Ron Wyden (D-OR) and then Senator Harris Wofford (D-PA) to pass the Unemployment Insurance/Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) Program
- 1994** – Supported the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994, which established the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund
- 1997** – Successfully promoted the expansion and permanent reauthorization of the Microloan program in The Small Business Reauthorization Act of 1997
- 1998** – Developed Program For Investment in Microentrepreneurs (PRIME) with support from Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM)
- 1998** – Successfully advocated for the permanent reauthorization of the SEA Program
- 1999** – Championed the establishment of the PRIME Program in the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act
- 2001** – PRIME Grants are made available for the first time
- 2003** – Published Introduction to Starting and Sustaining a Microenterprise Development Program, the first set of standards for the microenterprise development industry
- 2006** – Organized Congressional testimony from entrepreneurs to demonstrate the Microloan Program's positive impact on small business growth
- 2007** – Testified before the House Small Business Committee to oppose the removal of technical assistance grants from the Microloan Program
- 2008** – Culmination of a multi-year advocacy effort to prevent the elimination of the PRIME Program and Microloan Program from the Administration's Budget



- 2008** – Advocated for the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP), which was established by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008
- 2010** – Supported the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, which raised the cap on SBA Microloans to \$50,000 and established the CDFI Bond Guarantee Program
- 2010** – RMAP funds are made available for the first time to support entrepreneurship in rural communities
- 2011** – Released The Power of One in Three, a groundbreaking report on microbusinesses
- 2012** – Launched “One in Three” Campaign to unleash the job creation potential of one million microbusinesses in the U.S.
- 2013** – Formed the Micro Capital Task Force a private multi-stakeholder task force to present fact-based and practical recommendations to the White House, the Department of Treasury and the Congress regarding access to capital in amounts of up to \$250,000 for the smallest businesses.
- 2013** – Published Bigger Than You Think: The Economic Impact of Microbusiness in the United States, documenting AEO’s two-year study to show the impact of microbusinesses and their contributions to the American economy
- 2014** – Encouraged initial legislation by Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) to modernize and expand the Women’s Business Center program
- 2014** – Promoted entrepreneurship in job training programs as a component of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- 2015** – Advocated for implementation of Section 1071 of the Dodd-Frank Act to improve data collection on lending
- 2015** – Led coalition to increase lending authority for SBA’s 7(a) program
- 2016** – Supported Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Small Business Committee Chair Steve Chabot’s (R-OH) reauthorization of the Women’s Business Center Program
- 2016** – Advocated for doubling funding to the PRIME Grant Program for the 2017 fiscal year
- 2016** – Organized Members of Congress to urge the Department of Labor to include entrepreneurship metrics in final rules implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- 2016** – Developed the Microloan Modernization Act of 2016 with Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE)



- 2017** – Worked with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and ensured that funding came in at, or near, AEO’s FY 2018 funding requests
- 2017** – Hosted two Small Business Roundtables featuring guest speaker William Manger, associate administrator for the Office of Capital Access at the U.S Small Business Administration
- 2017**– Influenced tax reform legislation to include parity to pass-through small businesses

