



SMALL BUSINESS MAJORITY 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW



Letter from the Desk of Founder and CEO John Arensmeyer



From grappling with supply chain issues to workforce shortages and rising inflation, small business owners across the country continue to inspire us with their resiliency and resourcefulness. Our team has been uninterrupted in our efforts to reach small business owners who have been historically under-resourced and under-funded through our one-on-one outreach, policy work and partnerships.

As we enter a new year, we plan to continue working with entrepreneurs to connect them with information and resources to help them adapt and grow, while also advocating for long-term national and state policies to ensure small business growth and resiliency.

We couldn't do our work without your involvement and support. Have a peaceful and enjoyable holiday season. We look forward to collaborating with you in 2023.

Until next year,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Arensmeyer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Expanding resources for small business owners

This year, we continued to educate small business owners and entrepreneurs about important resources, funding options, policy updates and more. Over the course of the year, we hosted and participated in more than 280 events, partnering with more than 265 organizations and stakeholders. These events garnered more than 30,000 event registrants.



CEO John Arensmeyer with Administrator Guzman and members of our Small Business Councils at the SBA signing event

In August, CEO & Founder John Arensmeyer and U.S Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Isabella Guzman signed an agreement to collaborate on a new monthly webinar series called “[The Bottom Line](#).” Through this new collaboration, we have reached more than 12,000 event registrants and shared resources on topics like navigating digitization, revenue growth, cybersecurity and more. We are excited to see this series continue in the new year.

Through [Venturize](#), our free online resource hub, 108,000 small business owners gained access to educational tools and resources to navigate challenges to sustain, pivot and grow amidst changing market conditions. Although most federal relief programs expired this year, small businesses saw a rise in grant funding opportunities that allowed them to adapt their businesses and we worked to identify, share and promote those available opportunities.

Our new [Watch & Learn portal](#) launched this year to provide a one-stop center for small business owners to find on-demand webinars, short clips and upcoming events about a variety of topics, including access to capital, childcare, safety requirements, business growth, employee retention and much

more. Plus, a new audio series called “El ABC para Emprender” provides short and quick educational content for Spanish-speaking business owners who are starting and growing their small businesses.



Browse our bilingual resources on [Venturize.org](#) and [Venturize.org/es](#)

Strengthening partnerships to expand our reach



Our partnerships are key to expanding the resources we can provide to small businesses. In March, we partnered with the American Economic Liberties Project (AELP) to host U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), National Economic Council Deputy Director Bharat Ramamurti and small business owners for a [discussion](#) about the importance of creating accessible, competitive markets—online and beyond. Later, in August, we partnered with [The White House](#) to give an overview of the Inflation Reduction Act and what it means for small business owners.

This fall, we were excited to join the [Workforce and Justice Alliance](#) to help drive second-chance hiring while also supporting small businesses seeking to engage in criminal justice reform efforts. And last week, Public Policy Director Awesta Sarkash was confirmed as the Vice Chair of the [Responsible Business Lending Coalition](#), a role that will allow Small Business Majority to continue advocating for fair and non-predatory lending practices. Additionally, our [Alliance for a Resilient Small Business Economy](#) grew to include 60 small business organizations and advocates that we engaged on issues like access to capital, investments in technical assistance and more.

State highlights

In California, we welcomed our new Southern California Outreach Manager [Jessica Anguiano](#). We also launched our [California Small Business Council](#), with 11 small business owners from across the state who are excited to engage in small business advocacy, mentorship and resource sharing.

We engaged in exciting new initiatives throughout the state of California.

- In August, we partnered with [End Poverty in California](#) (EPIC) Founder Michael Tubbs to host a listening session to hear directly from small business owners in the Inland Empire about entrepreneurship as an opportunity to close the wealth gap.
- In May, our California team spoke in four cities alongside Child Care Providers United for their “A Day Without Childcare” [press event](#) about the key role that childcare providers play in the small business ecosystem.
- California Program Director Josaline Cuesta was appointed to Governor Newsom’s [Entrepreneurship & Economic Mobility Task Force](#). The Task Force, supported by the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), is designed to propel inclusive entrepreneurship by recommending policies and programs to ensure that all California small businesses have access to the resources they need to grow.
- In October, California Program Director Josaline Cuesta co-led a working group with CalOSBA Director Tara Lynn Grey at California Forward’s California Economy Summit focused on entrepreneurship and small businesses owned by people of color.

The California Team continues to advocate for innovative and effective legislative solutions to support entrepreneurs who face structural barriers in accessing capital. This fall we celebrated a number of policy wins, notably the expansion of the California Paid Family Leave Program, just in time for the program’s [20 year](#)

[anniversary](#). We also advocated for the creation of the [California Dream Fund Program](#), a one-time \$35 million grant program that has served more than 1,600 clients to date.



In August, we were joined by U.S. Congresswoman Karen Bass (CA-37) for a [celebration of Black Business Month](#). In addition to the Congresswoman, we were joined by the SBA, the Greater LA African American Chamber of Commerce (GLAAACC) and the Vermont Slauson Economic Development Corporation for two panels celebrating the contributions of local small business owners.

Read our [California policy recap](#) to learn about all of our policy wins.

In Colorado, we expanded our reach by bringing on [Tanya Perea Doose](#) as our new Colorado Outreach Manager. Tanya is conducting outreach and delivering resources on the Western Slope and serving rural small businesses across the state. We have also strengthened partnerships with key resource providers in Colorado such as the Minority Business Office, Colorado Consumer Health Initiative (CCHI) and Centennial State Prosperity (CSP).

Earlier this year, Colorado Director Lindsey Vigoda moderated an event with Good Business Colorado at Denver Startup Week, which included a panel of Small Business Majority's network members who discussed the importance of civic engagement for entrepreneurs. Additionally, we were able to partner with the FAMLI Department and the Colorado Secure Savings Program for a presentation in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) about the state benefits available to small business owners and employees.

Colorado enacted many new policies this year, and Small Business Majority is proud to have played a key role. We submitted letters and testified on a number of bills to strengthen the small business ecosystem, including the [Colorado FAMLI Program](#), [healthcare sharing plan reporting requirements](#), [reducing fees for business filing](#) and more. Additionally, we supported legislation in favor of promoting second-chance hiring and strengthening the childcare system in the state.

In October, Colorado Director Lindsey Vigoda was honored at the Good Business Colorado awards dinner as their Partner of the Year. Lindsey is excited to continue partnering with Good Business Colorado to deliver resources to small business owners across the state.



Watch our full Colorado legislative recap in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) to see what new laws could impact your small business in the new year.

In Georgia, we hosted more than 40 events for small business owners, including our monthly business lunch and learn series with Operation HOPE and a celebration of Women’s Small Business Month with special guests like Georgia State Representative Kim Schofield (60th District) and SBA Georgia District Director Terri Denison.

Dedicated to increasing access to financial services and equity for entrepreneurs, Georgia Director Rachel Shanklin joined the Georgia Advisory Board for [LiftFund](#), where she provides guidance and serves as a resource in cultivating community partnerships to grow LiftFund’s microloans and support services in Georgia.

In 2022, our advocacy efforts led to some important policy wins for small businesses, including the blocking of Georgia’s [1332 state innovation waiver](#), a proposal that would dismantle opportunities for small business owners to shop for plans that would address diverse healthcare needs. In order to make this happen, we counted on expert testimony from many Small Business Majority network members, including [Elaine Read](#), [Amy Bielawski](#), [Markela Taylor](#) and [Rich Gordon](#).

In September, Rachel co-facilitated a workshop titled “Building Inclusive Ecosystems for Entrepreneurs” during the [2022 Prosperity Summit](#) in partnership with the [Center for Transforming Lives](#). The session highlighted the importance of advocating for public policy solutions that promote inclusive small business growth and economic mobility for entrepreneurs facing systemic inequalities. She was joined by small business owner and health advocate [Knetta Adkins](#) who provided her expertise on the importance of access to quality and affordable healthcare as an entrepreneur.



In the Midwest, long-time Midwest Director Geri Aglipay was appointed by President Biden as the SBA Regional Administrator, Region 5. Soon after, we welcomed our new Midwest Director [Tasha Brown](#). Tasha hit the ground running working to support small businesses as they navigated the Illinois Secure Choice Savings Program registration process. Additionally, Tasha worked with Wisconsin Saves to educate Wisconsin small business owners about retirement savings.

In addition to her direct education work, Tasha is working with local partners and funders to support the larger small business ecosystem in Illinois through her participation in the [Chicago Inclusive Growth Coalition](#) (CIGC) and the [Collective Impact Learning Lab](#) with the Fund for Equitable Business Growth (FEBG), where she engages in discussions about how to create impactful small business resources and how to track that impact. In August, she supported Maison Courvoisier and the Chicago Urban League at their [Entrepreneurship Awards](#) reception.

We officially launched our [Illinois Small Business Council](#), bringing together business owners from across the state and various industries.

Tasha attended the [Experiential Classroom](#) event in Tampa, Florida and won second place in the BizStarts Experiential Exercise Contest! This clinic highlighted best practices in entrepreneurship education and gave Tasha an opportunity to network with her fellow resource providers and small business advocates.



In Virginia, we continued to engage state legislators in support of creating a paid family and medical leave program in the Commonwealth and submitted a [letter of support](#) to the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee. In addition, we submitted a [recommendation letter](#) to establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Review board in order to protect state residents and key stakeholders within the healthcare system from the high costs of prescription drug products.

This year, we also celebrated the first anniversary of our [Virginia Small Business Council](#) and spotlighted small business stories from our constituents in Virginia. Chief among them is [Shirley Modlin](#), member of our state council, who was featured in Family Friendly Virginia's storybook.



In New Mexico, our Public Policy Director Awesta Sarkash opened our new office and swiftly got to work engaging small business owners and uplifting policies that support the small business ecosystem. She participated in the Retirement Savings Symposium, where she spoke on a panel to discuss how New Mexican entrepreneurs can benefit from the New Mexico Work and \$ave program, a new retirement savings program for private-sector, nonprofit employees and the self-employed. She submitted a [comment letter](#) on the preliminary draft rules for New Mexico's Work and \$ave Program to outline ways in which the retirement program can better support small and underserved businesses.

We also hosted our first webinar with local partners including New Mexico's Economic Development Department and Finance Authority, the African American Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce and others about resources and access to capital for small business owners.

Updates from our National Women's Entrepreneurship Director



Undersecretary of Rural Development, Xochitl Torres Small with the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Led by our National Women's Entrepreneurship Director Rachel Shanklin, our team hosted more than 30 events to provide resources and assistance to women business owners across the country, with topics ranging from access to capital, procurement opportunities and digital marketing.

Additionally, we hosted a national webinar "[Resilience and Recovery: Supporting America's Rural Women Entrepreneurs](#)," where we uplifted the stories and insights of rural women entrepreneurs in our network. We also heard from keynote speaker, Undersecretary of Rural Development, Xochitl Torres Small with the U.S. Department of Agriculture about the importance of rural women entrepreneurs for economic development and prosperity in rural communities.

Advocating for small business needs on Capitol Hill

As Congress and the nation grappled with inflation, supply chain issues and a looming recession, Small Business Majority utilized data and stories from our network to ensure small business needs were well represented in discussions about the Inflation Reduction Act, improving financing options for small businesses, expanding the workforce pool, and more.

Small Business Majority helped get the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 over the line

Hundreds of small business owners and business organizations added their names to [a letter](#) urging Congress to pass the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. The letter outlined how small businesses stand to benefit from the legislation, namely by improving access to healthcare, increasing tax enforcement on large corporations, and making meaningful climate change investments.

We successfully fought to preserve full funding for the State Small Business Credit Initiative

More than 50 small business organizations signed on to [our letter](#) to congressional leaders underscoring the importance of preserving the \$10 billion allocated to the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI). Thankfully the bill that would have rescinded funds did not progress. We fully understand that access to capital can determine the success of any small business and are glad SSBCI funds were left intact and will be directly allocated to states to fund their own small business recovery initiatives.

Additionally, Small Business Majority and 42 other business organizations submitted [recommendations](#) to the U.S. Department of Treasury concerning the distribution of funding for technical assistance programs and activities that support small business ecosystems as part of the SSBCI. This effort was covered in [The Business Journals](#).

Small Business Majority Board Chair LaJuanna Russell testified on barriers to entrepreneurship

LaJuanna Russell, founder and president of Business Management Associates, Inc. (BMA) and the Chair of the Board of Directors for Small Business Majority, [testified](#) before the U.S. Select House Committee on Economic Disparity and Fairness in Growth about the critical role of entrepreneurship as a pathway to long-term financial stability and growth for Americans, as well as to discuss barriers to starting and sustaining diverse-led small businesses.

She also [testified](#) before the U.S. House Committee on the Budget in February on a proposal to eliminate the U.S. debt limit, which would help mitigate financial risks and uncertainty for businesses of all sizes.



LaJuanna Russell with Congressman Jim Himes (CT-04), Chairman of the U.S. House Select Committee on Economic Disparity and Fairness in Growth

Small Business Majority CEO testified on workforce challenges

Founder & CEO John Arensmeyer [testified](#) before the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship at a hearing, "The Small Business Workforce Challenge: Causes, Impacts, and Solutions." Entrepreneurs, especially those in under-resourced communities, need an array of support to address labor shortages and ensure employees are able to come back to the workforce. John offered a range of recommendations to help address workforce issues and support a diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Small Business Majority commented on Community Reinvestment Act proposed rule changes

In April, Small Business Majority [submitted comments](#) to the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation regarding proposed rules changes to the Community Reinvestment Act. Some of Small Business Majority's concerns include that these proposed changes would negatively impact underserved entrepreneurs in low and moderate income (LMI) communities and disincentivize banks from making qualified smaller-dollar loans that are the lifeblood of small businesses.

Read all of our policy recommendations at smallbusinessmajority.org/policy-agenda

Uncovering entrepreneurs' needs, challenges and opportunities



In March, we released a [landmark study](#) on how entrepreneurs are negatively impacted by an unlevel playing field between small and large companies, as underregulated technology platforms, corporate consolidations and pernicious business practices dramatically restrict markets and stifle competition. Our poll found entrepreneurs are being harmed by myriad anti-competitive practices, and they strongly support policies to create a more equitable environment in which to do business.

Our ongoing network surveys also continue to show the challenges small business owners face as they recover from the pandemic and deal with countless economic issues, such as inflation, supply chain and workforce shortages. Our May [survey](#) found that despite these challenges, small business owners remain optimistic and are taking novel approaches to grow and sustain their enterprises. A [joint survey](#) released with Start Small Think Big in October also reinforced this optimism, and began to explore some of the ways businesses have adapted digitally in a changing economic landscape.

We also released [new research](#) in October that will inform our work in 2023 around hiring individuals with a criminal background, which found widespread support for criminal justice reforms aimed at removing barriers to employment or entrepreneurship opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Read our research at smallbusinessmajority.org/research

Elevating the voices of small business owners

Sharing the authentic voices of small business owners is critical to our work. In 2022, not only did we start new state small business councils, but we also added four new entrepreneurs to our [National Small Business Council](#)—Talibah Bayles, Leo Carr, Monica Miller and Janna Rodriguez. Small Business Majority helped connect business owners with elected officials and other public speaking opportunities, including Alicia Villanueva (pictured on the right), who was featured in the documentary [Grit & Grace: The Fight for the American Dream](#) and invited to Washington, D.C. for a screening with the House Select Committee on Economic Disparity and Fairness in Growth.

In September, small business owner Kirk Vartan spoke at New America's [20 year anniversary celebration](#) of the California Paid Family Leave Program about how the program supports the small business ecosystem.



Small Business Majority Holiday Gift Guide



In celebration of Small Business Saturday and after last year's success, we brought back our Holiday Gift Guide, which promotes more than 300 small businesses. The Guide includes exclusive deals and products that support a variety of causes, and offers plenty of hand-crafted and unique items to shop from.

Shop the guide at
smallbusinessmajority.org/gift-guide-2022

Small businesses share their stories with the media

While small businesses continued to navigate a return to pre-COVID operations, our team remained vigilant for media opportunities that would amplify entrepreneur stories. Through cultivated relationships with state and national outlets, we connected reporters with Small Business Majority's small business owners and policy experts. These efforts resulted in hundreds of media mentions, op-eds, letters to the editors, and more. A few notable interviews include the following:

- As the thoughts of high inflation started to weigh heavily on the minds of consumers, [The Wall Street Journal](#) reached out for insights from small business owners on how to balance expenses and run a small business. Small Business Majority network member Chris Navratil and her father were interviewed.
- Small Business Majority network member Paul Shedden was profiled in a national [MarketWatch](#) article about resilience and the meaning of "small business community."
- Although COVID-19 federal relief aid was life-saving for many smaller firms, our [polling](#) found issues with the decision and waiting process. [Bloomberg](#) reported on the results of this survey and interviewed affected Small Business Majority network members Jaja Chen and her husband Devin Li.
- [The New York Times](#) also covered our survey on small business optimism after the pandemic.

Meet our small business council members

National Small Business Council

Talibah Bayles, Owner of TMB Tax & Financial Services
Mike Brey, Owner of Hobby Works
Leo Carr, Executive President of Elite Group
Nancy Clark, Owner of Drive Brand Studio
Zachary Davis, Owner of The Glass Jar, The Penny Ice Creamery and others
Tracy duCharme, Owner of Color Me Mine
Harland Henry, Owner of SunBiz Showcase Alliance, LLC
Neharika "Neha" Mehta, Co-Founder of Seashore Solutions LLC
Monica Miller, President of M. Miller Development Services, LLC
Vernita Naylor, Founder of Jabez Enterprise Group
Ron Nelsen, Owner of Pioneer Overhead Door
Mike Roach, Co-Owner of Paloma Clothing
Adam Rochon, Co-Owner of Sequoia Employee Benefits & Insurance Solutions
Janna Rodriguez, Owner of Innovative Daycare Corp
LaJuanna Russell, Founder and President of Business Management Associates, Inc

California Small Business Council

Stephen Bray, Owner of Judge Casey's Saucery
Jon Burgess, Co-Owner of Burgess Brothers
Hannah Gbeh, Executive Director of the San Diego County Farm Bureau
Elisha Henderson, Owner and Chief Editor of Final Look Editing
Corissa Hernandez, co-founder and visionary of Legacy Full Circle Financial & Insurance Services, the Empire Tavern, House of Xelas, and Nativo HLP
Mariette Martinez, Founder of MasterYourBooks
James O'Donnell, Co-Owner of Kocky's Bar and Grill
Renaldo Sanders, Owner of Sanders Family Day Care
Shanae Smith, Owner of Max-40 Fitness and Personal Training
Hope Suhr, Owner of Elpis Insurance

Georgia Small Business Council

Renard Beaty, Owner of Kick Start Martial Arts
Amy Bielawski, Owner of Hare-Brained Productions
Stephen Martin, Co-Owner of ACESA Cleaning Services
Jay Pitts, President and CEO of ClinCept, LLC
Jejuan Stewart, CEO of Eagle 7 LLC
Preeti Tanwar, Owner of HiEd Success
Suhyoony Wood, Owner of Beejou Craft Kombucha

Illinois Small Business Council

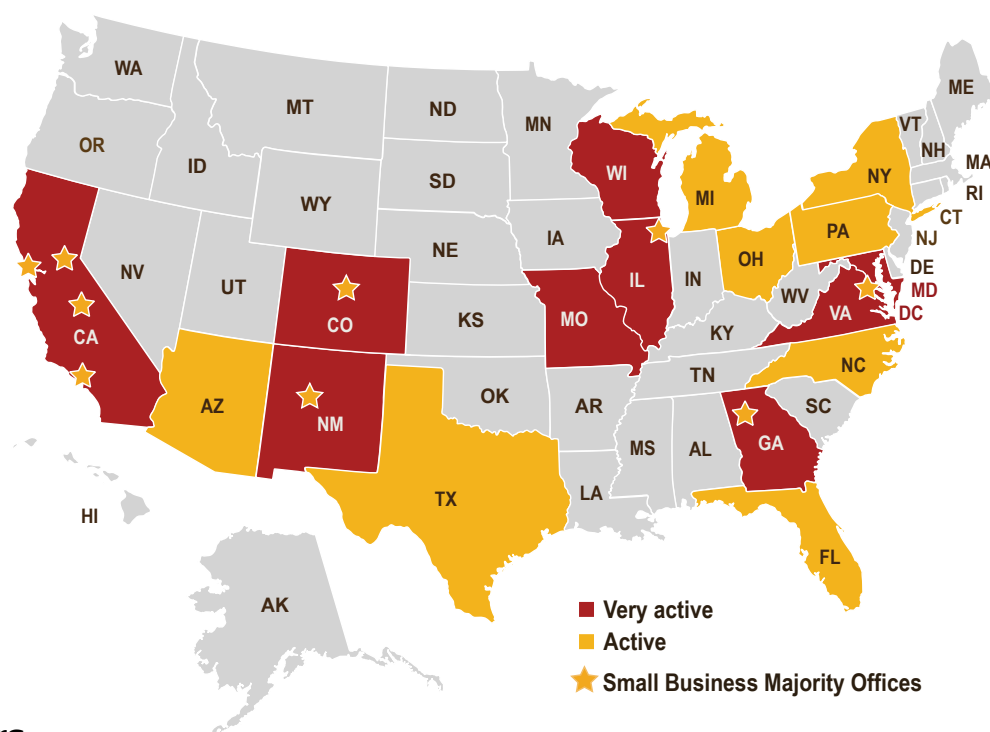
Leslie Allison-Seei, Entrepreneur and Director of Development for Northern Illinois Samoyed Assistance
Vanessa Ávalos, Owner of Luna y Cielo Play Café
Rachel Bernier-Green, Owner of Laine's Bake Shop
Johnathon Bush, Owner of Not Just Cookies
Siri Hibbler, Chairman and Founder of the official Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce, Garfield Park Chamber of Commerce, and the Cook County Black Chamber of Commerce
Evera Ivy, Owner of Ivy League Farms LLC
Chrishon Lampley, Founder of LCS Entertainment
Alan Moy, Owner of Viet Nom Nom
Lisa Weiss, Founder of Storybeat Studio

Virginia Small Business Council

Cassandra Freeman, Founder of Thoughtful Inspirations
Tierra Henderson, Owner of iFinancial by Tierra, LLC
Monica Jackson, Owner of Jackson Child Care
Sandra Leibowitz, Owner of Sustainable Design Consulting, LLC
Shirley Mae Modlin, Co-Owner of 3D Design

Where we work

Small Business Majority is a national small business organization that empowers America's diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy. We engage our network of more than 85,000 small businesses and 1,500 business and community organizations to deliver resources to entrepreneurs and advocate for public policy solutions that promote inclusive small business growth. Our work is bolstered by extensive research and deep connections with the small business community that enable us to educate stakeholders about key issues impacting America's entrepreneurs, with a special focus on the smallest businesses and those facing systemic inequities.



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