

MEMO Published May 19, 2022 • 5 minute read

Congressional Recess Packet: Engaging on Entrepreneurship at Home



Imani Augustus, Director of the Alliance for Entrepreneurial Equity

This easy-to-use recess packet contains talking points, social media content, and event ideas that will prepare you to discuss the issues women and minority entrepreneurs in your state and district face.

As Members of Congress travel back home, there is always fierce competition for their attention. Meetings with local veteran groups, tours of new manufacturing plants, and local press interviews

all vie for their time. **Our advice: don't forget about engaging entrepreneurs and small business owners—especially women and people of color starting and scaling businesses.**

Entrepreneurial success is one of the greatest drivers of wealth creation and must be at the center of any national effort to expand economic opportunity. Yet, right now, there are far too few female and minority entrepreneurs. Of all the businesses with employees in the United States, just 2% are Black-owned, 6% are Hispanic-owned, and men own three times the number of small businesses than women.

In this guide, there are sample talking points, social media content, and event ideas that will help you engage local entrepreneurs back home.

Talking Points

The Gap in Entrepreneurship

- Entrepreneurship is a key driver of wealth creation in our country, yet its benefits are experienced by too few women and minorities.
- Of the 6 million businesses in the United States with at least two employees, just 2% are Black-owned, 6% are Hispanic-owned, 10% are Asian-owned, and 0.4% are American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned.
- Although half the population, women are vastly underrepresented in business ownership. Men own three times the number of small businesses as women.
- This entrepreneurial inequity is the most unrecognized contributor to the racial wealth gap in the United States.
- There is no way to close the racial wealth gap without tackling structural barriers that hold people of color back from growing successful businesses.
- Greater opportunity and fairness in entrepreneurship have the potential to unleash a new era of business, hiring, and generational wealth.
- For more data and statistics, check out [*Entrepreneurial Inequity in America*](#).

Efforts by Congress and the Administration

- The American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief delivered more than \$400 billion in direct assistance to more than six million small businesses, particularly those run by Black, Hispanic, and Asian business owners who were hit hard by the pandemic.
- In 2021, Americans applied to start 5.4 million new businesses—more than 20% higher than any previous year on record.
- Just last year—over a nine-month span, nearly 2 million jobs were created by small businesses with less than 50 employees.
- Within weeks of taking office, the White House and Small Business Administration (SBA) implemented a number of reforms to target the Paycheck Protection Program to the smallest businesses and to companies that have been left behind in previous relief efforts. Sole proprietors and the self-employed were able to access more financial support. Lenders with well-established histories in minority communities, like CDFIs and MDIs, increased their lending. And the smallest businesses were prioritized for relief.
- The Administration also eliminated restrictions that prevented qualified businesses with a criminal record from obtaining relief, disproportionately aiding Black- and Latino-owned firms.
- The American Rescue Plan included features to ensure historically underserved small business would be able to access aid, including the prioritization of such businesses in the Restaurant Revitalization Fund.

Sample Social Media

Tweets

What would happen if Black businesses achieved parity in our economy? The US would see 7 million more jobs and more than \$730 billion in annual revenue. The time for entrepreneurial equity is now.

What would happen if Hispanic entrepreneurs were equipped to fully participate in our economy? The US would see 7.5 million more jobs and more than \$1 trillion in annual revenue. The time for entrepreneurial equity is now.

Minority-owned companies have been launching at an extraordinary rate in the last year. But many do not have the resources to ensure long-term success. We must eliminate the barriers in their way.

True wealth offers stability in the face of economic shocks, dignity in the midst of lost earnings, and legacy for one's family and community. In America, everyone deserves this opportunity.

6 million businesses in the US have employees, but less than 20% are minority-owned. To have a stronger, more inclusive economy and close the racial wealth gap for good, communities of color need support to fully participate in the benefits entrepreneurship provides.

Sample State/District Event Ideas

Accessing Capital Webinar with Financial Institutions

- Invite a panel of lenders from various institutions in your state/district (e.g. small or large banks, CDFIs, MDIs) to discuss what they look for when working with small businesses seeking financing.
- Invite a local Community Navigator to moderate and help with attendance.
- Promote event on social media, highlighting the difficulty small businesses have accessing traditional financing.
- Consider providing materials in multiple languages.

Virtual Financial Literacy Workshop and Q&A

- Host a presentation by a local Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) office on the basics of financial statements, business credit, and managing cash flow. The presentation can be followed by a Q&A with the audience.
- Prepare a small business resource packet for entrepreneurs looking for more information about where to start. Partner with local SCORE or Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to provide.

Youth Entrepreneur Day

- Host a family-oriented event where constituents can shop and support youth-based vendors from your district or students can learn about various pathways into entrepreneurship. The event should be interactive and have an educational element for the parents as well.
- Partner with Community Navigators or a local school to host workshops and guest speakers who will discuss branding, sales, and scalability with games and prizes.

- Select 2–3 student entrepreneurs to meet and highlight.
- Discuss current legislation in the House and Senate aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs.

Virtual Infrastructure Workshop: How to Start a Contractor Business

- Host an event centered on the recent passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to educate constituents on how to obtain a business license, bond and insurance, and fill out paperwork to become a licensed contractor.
- Partner with a senior business involved in contracting and procurement or with your local Minority Business Development Center.
- Invite the local chamber or a local state representative on the Infrastructure Committee in the legislature to co-host.
- District staff or Member should discuss the elements of IIJA and how much funding is coming to the state.

TOPICS

ALL TOPICS

ENTREPRENEURSHIP 15