



2020 NAWBO Advocacy Agenda

NAWBO's members are diverse in many ways, including the size of their business, the sector they serve in, the stage of business development, and personal politics. In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, NAWBO's Advocacy agenda embodies the ever-present need to create both the avenue and environment to build sustainable businesses and ensure that both the health of the business and business owners are at the forefront of the public policy agenda.

1. Innovation in Healthcare

Now more than ever, our nation understands the need for a sound healthcare system and acknowledges there must be a concerted effort to address the healthcare of the business owners as an individual.

- **Healthcare costs:** As premium rates and prescription drug costs continue to rise, NAWBO recognizes the need to address healthcare costs for small businesses.
- **The Well-Being of the Business Owner:** As a nation, NAWBO believes Congress should also understand the importance of investing in the health and wellness of our business owners, through expanded opportunities for telemedicine, mental health priorities and championing efforts that provide pathways for sustainability without added regulatory or fiscal impact to businesses.

2. Technology and Infrastructure

The COVID-19 crisis underscored the abundant need for innovative technology and infrastructure for the changing workplace. Whether it is transitioning to an online marketplace or keeping your employees on task and working collaboratively virtually, it takes broadband access from the largest cities to the most rural regions in America. Here we highlight some areas for Congress to focus:

- **Broadband Expansion and Reliability:** Business owners and their consumers need to have access to affordable, reliable broadband.
- **Integration and Access to Financial Technology (Fintech):** From online accounting and billing software to access to capital, lawmakers must harness the innovation of the fintech sector to provide entrepreneurs with sustainable business models.
- **Online Platform Models:** Business owners must have access to the tools necessary to establish their web presence and create online marketplaces to reach their local and global customers.

3. Regulatory Influence

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster (EIDL) Loan and Emergency EIDL grant programs provided access to much-needed capital for business owners. Still, the proportion by which women and minority business owners received funding underscores their barriers to entry.

- **Outreach to the Women and Minority Communities:** NAWBO believes that as agencies discussed these regulations, there should have been more communication with women and minorities about how best to get both the access to and the actual capital into the hands of these business owners.

4. Oversight

Bipartisan oversight efforts should include how financial institutions and lending vehicles served small businesses during the pandemic. It is critical to understand and find ways to improve the process for the small business community to gain access to capital quickly and efficiently in the wake of future pandemics.