



November 18, 2022

The Honorable Ben Cardin  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Small Business and  
Entrepreneurship  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rand Paul  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Small Business and  
Entrepreneurship  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cardin, and Ranking Member Paul:

On behalf of the [Association for Enterprise Opportunity](https://www.aeoworks.org) (AEO), the leading voice of innovation in microfinance and microbusiness in the United States, I write to provide our endorsement of S.5102, the *Community Advantage Loan Program Permanency Act of 2022*, which would codify the Community Advantage Loan Program of the Small Business Administration into statute.

AEO and its network of more than 2,700 members and partners provide increased support for entrepreneurship, capital access, opportunity, technical assistance, and job creation for small and microbusinesses in low-and moderate-income (LMI) communities.

The Community Advantage Loan Program has been critical in connecting access to small-dollar loans to LMI and underserved communities. AEO has long recognized that communities of color continuously face barriers to capital access at disproportionate rates and recognizes the Community Advantage Loan Program to be a vehicle for parity in small-dollar lending. However, the program has not been codified in statute, despite the great strides it has made in providing affordable loans to underserved communities. We therefore excitedly endorse the *Community Advantage Loan Program Permanency Act of 2022* and look forward to working alongside Congress, the Small Business Administration, and our members to bolster the program and improve further it in the years to come.

We ask that Congress and the SBA take care to ensure that any new expansion of the Community Advantage program works to complement the capabilities of the Small Business Lending Companies (SBLCs) providing traditional 7(a) loans. In any final statute, Community Advantage (CA) lenders should gain an ability to become SBLCs, so long as they are in good standing with SBA, to provide additional resources to entrepreneurs seeking capital. Conversely, mission-based SBLCs that meet the eligibility requirements of the CA loan program should be able to request CA status if the CA program is more aligned with their capacity to meet current market needs.



We have long advocated for the permanency of Community Advantage, and if S.5102 is passed, we look forward to supporting the Community Advantage Working group at SBA and to reviewing the disaggregated data collected on the efficiency of the program. On behalf of over 2,700 organizations, microbusinesses, and lenders across the country, we thank Chair Cardin for his dedication to uplifting America's microbusiness community and urge Congress to pass this legislation to drive assistance to entrepreneurs who continue to face barriers in their endeavor to pursue the American dream of business ownership.

Please feel free to contact me at [cevens@aeoworks.org](mailto:cevens@aeoworks.org) if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Connie E. Evans', written in a cursive style.

Connie E. Evans,  
President & CEO

Association for Enterprise Opportunity

**Cc: Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship**