Dear Colleague,

**RE: Bring A Self-Employment Assistance Program to California. Spread the word about our petition.**

CAMEO, California Association for Micro Enterprise Opportunity, is working to bring a Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) program to California.

A federal program that will help the unemployed become their own boss and start their own small businesses was tucked into the [Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hr3630enr/pdf/BILLS-112hr3630enr.pdf). In the bill is a $35 million SEA program; recently, the U.S. [Department of Labor](http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/eta/ETA20121073.htm) issued [guidelines](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/UIPL/UIPL_20_12_acc.pdf) for the program.

The money can be used by states to offer a SEA program. If California implements a program it will receive at least $5.3 million in federal money to benefit a potential 20,000 entrepreneurs.

Under the SEA program, unemployed workers will be able to receive or maintain their unemployment insurance benefits while they start their own small businesses – a full-time job in its own right – without having to look for other full-time work. Currently, in California this is not the case.

California has had double digit unemployment for more than three years. In this time of persistent high unemployment, we need to do everything we can to encourage job creation. We must recognize and embrace the fact that self-employment creates at least one job per start-up that is for the owner, and creates jobs for others over time.

California had such a program in the late 1990′s, but it was abandoned. People didn’t take advantage of the program because they couldn’t qualify for their unemployment insurance extension and there was a lack of entrepreneurial training. Few even knew about it. The new SEA corrects these problems and provides adequate funding for implementation.

California leaders have the opportunity to assist the unemployed to become self-employed, create jobs, and reduce the unemployment rolls – all at the same time.

In order to garner support, CAMEO has launched a petition calling on state leaders to implement and support the SEA program – *Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss* – and we need your help to spread the word! Here’s how:

* Sign the petition yourself. You can find it online at <http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition>, or by following the link on the [CAMEO website](http://microbiz.org/).
* Have your organization join the campaign and issue a press release that you have joined the campaign.
* Engage your employees and have them sign the petition and share with others.
* Engage your email list in the same way.
* Promote the petition on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.
* Send us your clients who could/would benefit from a SEA program and might be willing to be a social media champion (email [hpickman@microbiz.org](mailto:hpickman@microbiz.org) ).

Attached is a toolkit with a sample press release, sample emails, sample social media posts and html code for a button with a link to the petition to use in emails or on the web.

If you have any questions, please contact Heidi Pickman, our Communication Director at (415) 992-4484 or [hpickman@microbiz.org](mailto:hpickman@microbiz.org).

Sincerely,



Claudia Viek

C.E.O.

**Sample Press Release**

 [Your logo]

**[Your Name] Joins the ‘Help Unemployed BYOB – Be Your Own Boss’** **Campaign**

*Aims to bring a Self-Employment Assistance Program to California*

**[Your City] – [Release date] – [Your org name]** today announced its participation in the [*Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss*](http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition) campaign organized by CAMEO, the California Association for Micro Enterprise Opportunity. The campaign’s goal is to have the State of California join the six other states who have implemented a Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) program.

The federal government has set aside $35 million for states to implement a SEA program and help unemployed become their own boss and start their own small business. If California implements a program it will receive at least $5.3 million in federal money to benefit a potential 20,000 entrepreneurs.

Under the SEA program, unemployed Californians will be able to receive or maintain their unemployment insurance benefits while they start their own small businesses – a full-time job in its own right – without having to look for other full-time work. Currently, in California this is not the case.

**[Your quote]**

“We are excited to have **[YOUR ORG NAME]** join the *Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss* campaign,” said Claudia Viek, C.E.O. of CAMEO. “California’s unemployment rate remains high, higher than the national average. If the unemployed can’t find a job, they can create their own. California needs to apply for these federal funds and train the unemployed to become their own boss.”

California has had double digit unemployment for more than three years. **[sentence or two on local unemployment and the need in their community]**  In this time of persistent high unemployment, we need to do everything we can to encourage job creation. We must recognize and embrace the fact that self-employment creates at least one job per start-up, that is for the owner, and creates jobs for others over time.

Social media will play a crucial role to raise awareness about the importance of helping the unemployed create their own job. The first step in the campaign will drive supporters to [**http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition**](http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition) where they can sign a petition that will be delivered to Governor Brown and the California legislature. The campaign will use other tools as necessary to convince the state to apply for the program.

California leaders have the opportunity to assist the unemployed to become self-employed, create jobs, and reduce the unemployment rolls – all at the same time.

Contacts: **[Your Media contact]**

Heidi Pickman, CAMEO

415-992-4484; [hpickman@microbiz.org](mailto:hpickman@microbiz.org)

**About [Your org name]**

**[Your org boilerplate]**

**About** [**CAMEO**](http://microbiz.org/)

CAMEO’s mission is to grow a healthy, vibrant, thriving environment for all entrepreneurs and start-up businesses by advancing the work of our statewide member network – the over 160 organizations, agencies and individuals dedicated to furthering the fortunes of micro-businesses in California. Our vision is to create economic opportunity for all entrepreneurs, to build wealth and strong California communities.

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**Sample Emails**

1. *To send to your employees*

The workforce is changing.  Climbing the corporate ladder is no longer a sure thing. Creating your own small business is an excellent option. And if you’re unemployed it may be your only option. With that in mind, **[insert your organization name]** is participating in the [*Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss*](http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition)campaign to have the State of California join the six other states who have implemented a Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) program.

The federal government has set aside $35 million for states to implement a SEA program and help the unemployed become their own boss and start their own small business. If California implements a program it will receive at least $5.3 million in federal money to benefit a potential 20,000 entrepreneurs.

Under the SEA program, unemployed workers will be able to receive or maintain their unemployment insurance benefits while they start their own small businesses – a full-time job in its own right – without having to look for other full-time work. Currently, in California this is not the case.

Here’s how you can help bring a SEA program to California:

* Sign the [petition](http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition) to the State of California to bring this program to California.
* Encourage those in your social networks to do so.
* Encourage people you know who may benefit from the program to leave their story in the comment section of the petition.
* Continue to participate in the campaign during the fall as the campaign unfolds.

Please join us in participating in the [*Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss*](http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition) campaign.

Thank you.

*2) Email blurb to send to your email list after you joined campaign*

We just joined the [*Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss*](http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition)campaign to help the unemployed become their own boss.

The federal government has set aside $35 million for states to implement a SEA program and help unemployed become their own boss and start their own small business. If California implements a program it will receive at least $5.3 million in federal money.

Under the SEA program, unemployed workers will be able to receive or maintain their unemployment insurance benefits while they start their own small businesses – a full-time job in its own right – without having to look for other full-time work. Currently, in California this is not the case.

We’ve joined with CAMEO, California Association for Micro Enterprise Opportunity, in the [*Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss*](http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition)campaign to have the State of California join the six other states who have implemented a Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) program.

California has had double digit unemployment for more than three years. In this time of persistent high unemployment, we need to do everything we can to encourage job creation. We must recognize and embrace the fact that self-employment creates at least one job per start-up, that is for the owner, and creates jobs for others over time.

Please [sign the petition](http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition) to bring this important program to California. Then, ask five friends to sign!

Thank you.

**Sample Tweets**   
  
*To tweet in September, October.*

* Unemployed in CA? Be Your Own Boss! Bring a Self-employment assistance program to CA <http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition> #BYOBoss
* Unemployed in CA? No job? Create own. Sign Petition for Self-employment assistance in CA: <http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition> #BYOBoss
* Help the Unemployed #BYOBoss, bring Self-employment Assistance to California. Visit <http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition> to find how
* Know someone who is unemployed and wants to run their own business. Sign petition: <http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition> #BYOBoss
* California’s unemployment rate is higher than national average. #BYOBoss. Sign now <http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition>
* California can get $5.3 million from fed govt to Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss <http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition> #BYOBoss
* Keep unemployment insurance benefits while starting your own small business in CA <http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition> #BYOBoss

**Sample Facebook/LinkedIn Status Updates**  
  
*To post in September, October.*

* Self-employment is a labor market trend and has grown by 28 percent from 2003-2008, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Support self-employment for the unemployed: http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition
* California can get $5.3 million from federal government to Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss. Sign the petition to make it a reality: http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition
* Been unemployed? Can’t find a job? Create your own. Support efforts to bring a Self-employment assistance program to California, so that you can keep your UI benefits while starting your own small business: http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition
* California’s unemployment rate is much higher than the national average. Help bring it down by supporting a self-employment assistance program in the state: <http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition>
* If the unemployed can’t find a job, they can create their own. California needs to apply for available federal funds and train the unemployed to become their own boss. Support the *Help Unemployed BYOB - Be Your Own Boss* campaign. http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition

**Web or Email Image with link to petition**

<a href="http://bit.ly/beyourownbosspetition"><img class="alignleft size-medium wp-image-1065" title="CAMEOBYOBoss" src="http://www.microbiz.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CAMEOBYOBoss.jpg" alt="" width="300" height="173" /> </a>