

## CAMEO Recess Packet May 2018

### Why You Need to Be an Advocate

CAMEO advocates for micro-businesses every day. On Capitol Hill and in the Administration, CAMEO is active in promoting our agenda. But any successful advocacy effort also includes direct communications between constituents and their elected officials. That is where you come in.

As micro-business owners, you are affected by government policy every day. While CAMEO's government relations team will continue to advocate to the nearly 170 organizations and agencies dedicated to furthering micro-business development, your engagement with lawmakers in your home districts can make all the difference.

### How to Reach Your Legislator

The best way to make sure CAMEO's message is heard is to schedule a meeting with your Senators and Representative through their local district office, but other options also exist.

- Your Senators are Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris. Senator Feinstein's office locations and phone numbers can be found [here](#). Senator Harris' office locations and phone numbers can be found [here](#).
- Click [here](#) to find your Representative by entering your zip code. Each Member will have a website with the locations and phone numbers of District/State offices.
- Schedule a meeting with your legislators. Call your district office and be flexible. You may have to make more than one call to arrange this meeting.
- An alternative to one-on-one meetings is attending District/State town hall meetings. These are open to the public and can generally be found on the Members website or by contacting the office. If you attend one of those events, you can request a brief introduction with the Member.
- Finally, social media, including Twitter and Facebook, are brief, but well-used avenues for communicating with legislators. Committees also have social media accounts where comments can be directed.

## Making the Meeting Valuable

The goal of Congressional outreach during recess is to amplify the message CAMEO builds in Washington. Start by introducing yourself, your business, and CAMEO.

Good meeting tips:

- *Keep It Simple:* Members will likely not know the ins and outs of our policy requests. Likewise, you are not expected to be a policy expert.
- *Keep It Concise:* These meetings tend to be short. Know what you want to say and focus on the “ask.”
- *Have Your Handout:* Leave behind the Funding Request Chart with the office. This has additional information staff will want.
- *Follow Up:* Follow up matters. After the meeting, be sure to send the appropriate thank you email to the legislator and any staff members in attendance. If you discussed any items that need to be passed along, please do so in a timely fashion. If the legislator asked you any questions and you need additional information, please feel free to send your requests to Heidi Pickman at [hpickman@microbiz.org](mailto:hpickman@microbiz.org).

## What to Talk About

### Ask for Support on CAMEO’s Funding Requests

The work of lenders and counselors is only possible with adequate resources. Each year, CAMEO submits funding requests for proven programs that have a significant return for the American economy. An important part of our advocacy efforts is ensuring that the programs are fully funded and we ask that you echo CAMEO’s requests.

Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate each draft separate funding bills, which are then merged into the final funding levels presented to the President. As with most years, differences between the House and Senate dollar amounts for entrepreneurial programming government-wide will need to be addressed. Below are the two areas of importance to discuss with your legislators.

### 1. Save Critical Funding for SBA Entrepreneurial Programs

Entrepreneurship funding requires support from Republicans and Democrats alike. CAMEO is asking all its members and supporters to call their Member of Congress and urge them to support FY 2019 small business lending programs. In particular, there are three cornerstone programs that provide critical support to entrepreneurs, especially in economically distressed areas. The programs that are under threat of being cut, are the Treasury’s CDFI program, the



SBA Microloan Program and the SBA PRIME program.

| <u>Program</u>  | <u>CAMEO Request</u> |
|---|----------------------|
| Treasury Community Development Financial institutions (CDFI) Fund | \$300M               |
| Treasury CDFI Bond Guarantee Program                              | \$1B                 |
| SBA Microloan – Lending   | \$44M                |
| SBA Microloan – Technical Assistance                              | \$31M                |
| SBA PRIME   | \$10M                |
| SBA Women’s Business Centers                                      | \$21.75M             |
| SBA Small Business Development Centers                            | \$140M               |

- **SBA PRIME Program -- \$10 million**

- Program for Investment in Micro-entrepreneurs (PRIME) provides assistance to organizations that help low-income entrepreneurs who lack sufficient training and education to gain access to capital to establish and expand their small businesses.

- **SBA Microloan Program -- Lending \$44 million, Technical Assistance \$31 million**

- The Microloan program provides loans up to \$50,000 to help small businesses start up and expand. The average microloan is about \$13,000. To receive a microloan, certain applicants receive training and planning technical assistance.

- **Treasury Department (CDFI) -- \$250 million**

- Community development financial institutions (CDFIs) are private financial institutions that are 100% dedicated to delivering responsible, affordable lending to help low-income, low-wealth, and other disadvantaged communities.

## 2. Save Critical Funding for Rural Development

These programs are integral pieces of the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) and critical to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Since 2009, RBS investments in rural communities have assisted over 112,000 businesses and saved or created over 450,000 jobs. To improve opportunities in rural America, these programs should be fully funded.

| <u>Program</u>                     | <u>Request</u> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Rural Business Development Grant   | \$35M          |
| Intermediary Relending Program     | \$19M          |
| Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance | \$3M           |
| Value Added Producer Grants        | \$11M          |

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Let us know how your meetings went by contacting Heid Pickman at [hpickman@microbiz.org](mailto:hpickman@microbiz.org)

