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**Arts Council of New Orleans and National Microbusiness Association to Award NOLA Artist \$1000**

*Beverly Boulet Is Winner of the "Jazzin' Up Main Street" Design Contest; Prize Will Be Presented During the [2014 AEO National Conference](#)*



New Orleans, May 2, 2014 -- The Arts Council of New Orleans recently partnered with the [Association for Enterprise Opportunity \(AEO\)](#) to host a design contest for NOLA artists. The contest goal was to highlight New Orleans's vibrant creative economy by showcasing a local artist's work in AEO's conference marketing such as the cover of the conference program book.

"The Jazzin' Up Main Street design contest invited artists to capture New Orleans' iconic flavor in a signature design to represent and market the AEO conference. Through this partnership we wanted to highlight the work of local artists as part of our rich, vibrant, creative economy," Kim Cook, Arts Council of New Orleans President & CEO said. "I am pleased we had an opportunity to team up with AEO to recognize the value, impact and importance of artist-run microbusinesses in New Orleans."



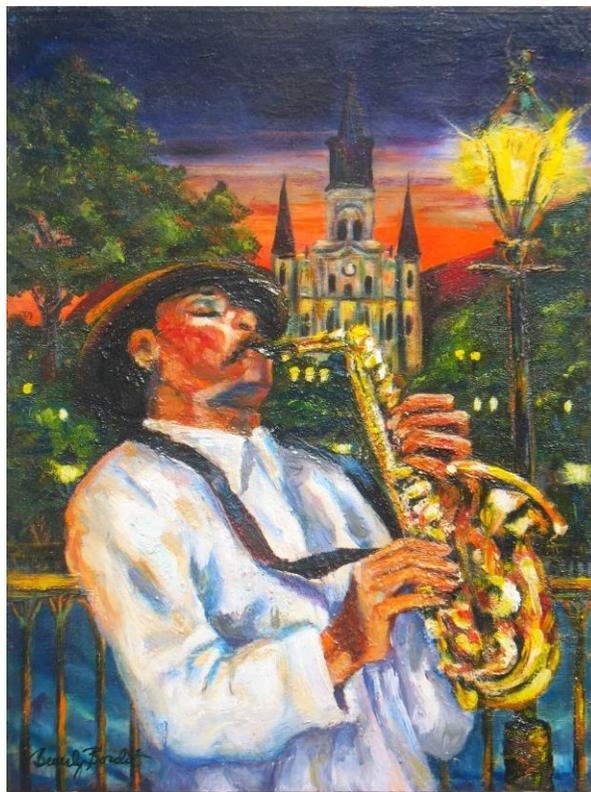
AEO is the national trade association for U.S. microbusiness and microfinance. The Washington, D.C.-based group is hosting its [annual conference](#) here Monday, May 5-Wednesday, May 7 at the Astor Crowne Plaza.

"AEO decided to host this year's convening in New Orleans partly because of its regard as a dynamic creative and cultural hub. This is a place where art --be it music, dance, theatre or a vivid canvas painting such as Beverly's-- has its own bellowing voice. And, through diverse

creative expressions, that voice transcends traditional, cultural social barriers as part of NOLA's entrepreneurial environ," says Connie Evans, AEO's president and CEO.

Beverly Boulet is not a native New Orleanian, but says it is a place she always knew she would reside in.

"New Orleans is a city of contradictions: beauty and inelegance, religious obsession and flaunted sin, oppression and freedom, traditional and contemporary architecture, opulence and poverty, uncultured and genteel personage. The dichotomy is celebrated and expressed through poetry, music, painting, sculpture, and all of the arts. In return, artists are afforded the freedom and lifestyle acceptance needed to pursue their craft," Boulet says.



*Jazz by Lamplight*  
Beverly Boulet

The Arts Council of New Orleans-AEO partnership is a likely pairing. AEO works to advance the microbusiness industry by equipping Main Street entrepreneurs, who are typically underserved business owners, with critical support services and capital they need to start, grow and hire.

The Council is deeply committed to ensuring that the NOLA creative community, comprised of many entrepreneurs, receives the respect it deserves in the emerging economy.

"The "Jazzin' Up Main Street" design contest is a marked example of two organizations

collaborating to highlight an integral part of the broader economy," Evans.

The Arts Council of New Orleans and AEO will present Boulet with the \$1,000 grand prize on Monday, May 5, at AEO's conference welcome reception, which is hosted by platinum conference sponsor Capital One. Boulet will display several pieces of art, including the winning piece "Jazz by Lamplight", to showcase her love of putting brush to canvas. Click [here to view an online gallery](#) of Beverly Boulet's work.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the microbusiness industry and to [view microbusiness infographics](#). Learn more about the 2014 AEO National Conference at [www.microbusinessconference.org](http://www.microbusinessconference.org).

**Download the 2014 AEO National Conference app [here!](#)**

OR



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CONFERENCE APP!

- [Download](#) the 2014 AEO National Conference program book
- View the [conference agenda](#)
- View list of [conference sponsors](#)
- Follow @AEOWorks with the hashtag #AEO2014

## About AEO

[Association for Enterprise Opportunity](#) (AEO) is the national trade association for U.S. microbusiness and microfinance. We are the voice of microbusiness in the United States. AEO's Alliance represents a broad and diverse membership network that has helped millions of entrepreneurs contribute to economic growth while supporting themselves, their families and their communities. Together, we are working to change the way that capital and services flow to America's underserved entrepreneurs—**on Main Street and beyond**—so they can start, grow and hire.

**Arts Council of New Orleans** is a private, non-profit organization designated as the City's official arts agency. As a multidisciplinary arts agency, the Arts Council operates in three conceptual areas: People- Community Engagement and the Creative Citizen, Place- Civic Design and the Urban Aesthetic, and Artists- Artistic Excellence and Creative Services. Each area works to advance the Arts Council's overall mission to nurture creativity and enrich lives through inspiration, connection, transformation, and investment in the New Orleans arts and cultural community.

## MORE ABOUT MICROBUSINESS

### **Microbusinesses are important.**

Microbusinesses are powerful – **92 percent of U.S. businesses are microbusinesses, and generate approximately \$4.87 trillion annually for the U.S. economy.**

Microbusinesses **create jobs** in their communities – **25.5 million microbusinesses contribute to employing 41.3 million individuals.**<sup>1</sup>

Microbusinesses are **vehicles for self-sufficiency** for their owners – they allow their owners to accumulate a median net worth of nearly 2.5 times higher than non-business owners.

And they are a **key driver for America's employment and economic health** – If one in three Main Street microbusinesses hired just one employee, the country would reach full employment — that's huge.

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AEO report data show microbusinesses, although small, in the aggregate, have a significant influence on job creation by **contributing to the employment of 41.3 million individuals** — approximately 31 percent of private sector employment.

Despite their impact, microbusiness owners often meet tremendous hurdles when trying to access requisite capital and business-support services. In fact, according to Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew, **8,000 small and microbusiness credit application are declined each day in America.** The need for credit is indisputable, as is the disparity in loan approvals for underserved entrepreneurs.

Microbusinesses are powerful – In 2011, **92 percent of U.S. businesses were microbusinesses, and generated approximately \$4.87 trillion annually for the U.S. economy.**

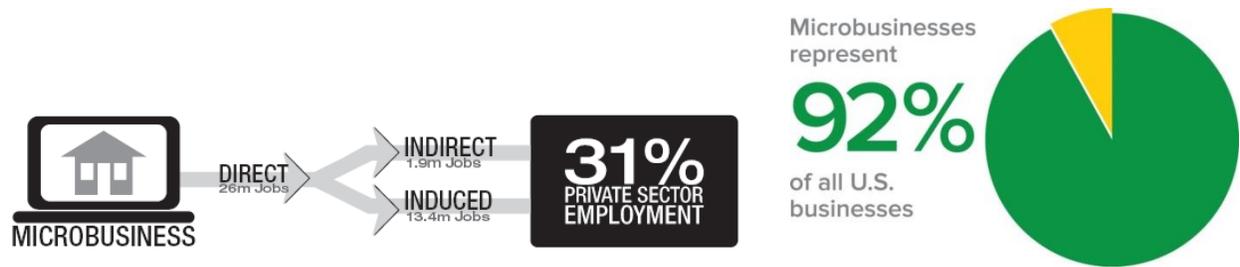
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Microbusiness is an important path to **key self-sufficiency, wealth-building and job creation.**

If entrepreneurs cannot acquire capital and other resources to start or grow their enterprises, then **the heartbeat of Main Street USA slows**, jobs are not created, the vibrancy of communities dim, and the wealth chasm widens.

## MICROBUSINESS INFOGRAPHICS



Microbusinesses are defined as enterprises with fewer than five employees, including the owner



“Microbusinesses are an important tool for women to achieve upward mobility, providing them with financial independence through self-employment and thereby allowing them to support their children and families.”

Learn more at the “Leading with Women for a Full and Robust Economy” conference workshop!