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Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO) Holds Microbusiness Conference Kick-off at St. Louis City Hall

National Business Trade Group: 'Entrepreneurship Reverses Unemployment'



St. Louis Comptroller Darlene Green Hosts Media, Civic Officials, Nonprofits

St. Louis, Mo., April 30, 2013 — Today the [Association for Enterprise Opportunity \(AEO\)](#) hosted a kick-off event for its annual national conference at St. Louis City Hall Rotunda. AEO will host its 22nd conference – [TILT Forward: The Power of Microbusiness](#) – at the Chase Park Plaza Hotel, Sunday, May 5 through Wednesday, May 8. Comptroller Darlene Green is the conference co-chair.

AEO's annual conference focuses on **creating jobs and economic opportunities in communities through Main Street microbusinesses**. The national nonprofit trade association represents the microbusiness industry, and promotes entrepreneurship as a tool to combat unemployment and a path to wealth creation.

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.¹

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.

"Main Streets and side streets across this country are lined with powerful **job-creation agents** — microbusinesses," says [Connie Evans](#), president and CEO of AEO. "These businesses add immeasurable value to their communities by stimulating their local economies and creating jobs. It is critical to **equip them for success** with the capital and business support services they need to thrive, **grow and hire**."

In March, the St. Louis unemployment rate was 7.3 percent, and the region's workforce rate continues to grow at a snail's pace. Evans says **microbusinesses help to reverse unemployment**. "[AEO research](#) shows that [if one in three Main Street microbusinesses hired just one employee, the country would reach full employment](#)," [Evans says](#). "When you build a business you add a job, so **it is critical that we invest in microbusinesses so they are positioned to flourish, and reach their potential**. The conference will focus on innovations in delivering capital and services to microbusiness owners, and explore policies that help advance the microbusiness industry. See the full conference agenda [here](#)."

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Kick-off Event Photos



Confirmed AEO Conference Speakers



Will Allen, President and CEO of Growing Power, Inc.; Urban Agriculturist



Daymond John, Founder and CEO of FUBU, and a star of ABC's "Shark Tank"



The Honorable Marie C. Johns, Deputy Administrator, U. S. Small Business Administration

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2013 Conference Overview

- Date: Sunday, May 5 through Wednesday, May 8
- Location: Chase Park Plaza Hotel; 212 N. Kingshighway, St. Louis, Mo., 63108
- Events
 - Marketplace of Local Microbusinesses: Monday, May 6, 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm
 - AEO Policy Luncheon and Forum: Structuring Capital Access in Rural Markets: Monday, May 6, Noon to 1:30 pm
 - AEO Policy and Research Forum. Keynote: The Honorable Marie C. Johns, Deputy Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration: Monday, May, 6, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
 - Access to Capital for Women-owned Business: Challenges, Strategies, Solutions (Hosted by Justine PETERSEN): Monday, 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm
 - Women's Business Center Forum: Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Women's Business Ownership Act: Monday, May 7, 8:00 am to Noon
 - Opening Session, Keynote: Will Allen, President and CEO, Growing Power, Inc.: Tuesday, May 7, 8:15 am to 9:30 am
 - From Micro to Millions: A Conversation with Daymond John, and Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards Luncheon: Wednesday, May 8, 11:30 am to 2:35 pm

2013 Conference Media Center

[Download the conference app here!](#) (Password = aeo)

OR



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CONFERENCE APP!

Click [here](#) for full agenda and registration information, including one-day rates. Members of the press may show credentials for entry.

Watch the Conference PSA: <http://bit.ly/13zK4VD>

Interview opportunities

- [Connie Evans](#), President and CEO, AEO. [See Connie Evans](#) talk about the 2013 National Conference.
- [Darlene Green](#), St. Louis City Comptroller, 2013 AEO National Conference Co-chair
- [Robert Boyle](#), President and CEO, Justine PETERSEN
- [Will Allen](#), Founder and CEO, Growing Power, Inc.; Urban Agriculturist
- [Daymond John](#), Founder and CEO, FUBU, and a star on ABC's "Shark Tank"
- [Michelle Wright](#), St. Louis microbusiness owner

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Learn more about AEO's 2013 National Conference

- Read more about **AEO's National Conference** [here](#).
- Read the **conference agenda** [here](#).
- Click [here](#) to view the 2013 Conference **Sponsorship Brochure**.

AEO National Conference Tracks

[Track One: Mission, Money, Markets, Oh My!](#)

[Track Two: Accelerating Business Success](#)

[Track Three: Promoting Local Food Access for Jobs and Microbusiness Development](#)

[Track Four: The Executive View](#)

About AEO

The [Association for Enterprise Opportunity](#) (AEO) is the voice of microbusiness in the United States. For two decades, AEO and its more than 400-member organizations have helped millions of entrepreneurs contribute to the economic growth of their communities and America. Its network includes a broad range of organizations that provide capital and services to assist underserved entrepreneurs in starting, stabilizing and expanding their businesses. AEO's *One in Three Alliance* is a national movement to create awareness that [if one in three Main Street microbusinesses hired one additional employee, the country would reach full employment](#).



AEO Association for
Enterprise Opportunity
THE VOICE OF MICROBUSINESS