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AEO BY THE NUMBERS

→NUMBER OF MEMBER
ORGANIZATIONS AND
PARTNERS: 450

→NUMBER OF MICROLOANS
UNDERWRITTEN BY MEMBER
ORGANIZATIONS IN 2011:
15,000

→AEO MEMBERS HAVE
REACHED MORE THAN 1M
MICROBUSINESSES

→FOUNDED IN 1991

CDFI
COALITION
WWW.CDFI.ORG

ASSOCIATION FOR ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITY

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO) is a national trade industry association that advocates for the interests of entrepreneurs on Main Street USA and in communities across America. AEO members and partners include a broad range of organizations that provide capital and services to assist entrepreneurs in underserved communities as they start, stabilize, and expand their businesses. AEO works to change the way capital and services flow to underserved communities, so that entrepreneurs can create jobs and opportunities for all.

AEO's network represents the microbusiness and microfinance industry. With more than 450 member organizations and partners, it has a reach of more than one million microbusinesses across the United States.

Most of AEO's lending members are designated as Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). In 2011, these organizations collectively underwrote nearly 15,000 microloans. In addition to capital, these CDFI microlenders provided clients with an array of critical services including coaching, mentoring, and training.

Microbusinesses are powerful vehicles for self-sufficiency, allowing their owners to accumulate a median net worth nearly 2.5 times higher than non-business owners. Today, more than 92 percent of businesses in the nation are microbusinesses, generating \$4.87 trillion annually for the U.S. economy. They also contribute to the employment of 41.3 million individuals. Yet, despite their value and power, microbusiness owners routinely face challenges when attempting to access critical capital and business support services.

AEO is committed to changing how capital and services flow to America's microbusinesses on Main Street and beyond so they can start, grow, and hire. AEO's One in Three Alliance is a national movement to create awareness of microbusinesses as job creators and the fact that that if one in three Main Street microbusinesses hired one additional employee, the country would reach full employment.



JUSTINE PETERSEN

Founded in 1997, AEO member Justine PETERSEN seeks to help individuals, families, and small businesses build assets and create enduring change. Named in honor of the late Ms. Justine M. Petersen, a local pioneer in advancing the principles of financial capability, the organization partners with financial institutions and foundations to establish loan funds for underserved entrepreneurs, including veterans and women— and minority-owned businesses and contractors in the St. Louis, Missouri area. Justine PETERSEN is also a One in Three Alliance partner and its CDFI, Great Rivers Community Capital, is ranked as one of the nation's highest-performing CDFIs.

Justine PETERSEN has originated over \$24 million in loans to 4,500 clients, providing safe and affordable capital to build small businesses and personal credit scores. As a member of the Credit Builders Alliance, Justine PETERSEN embraces the personal credit score as the fundamental asset for economic empowerment.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Sandra Dobyne are quintessential Justine PETERSEN clients. Looking to expand their business and double the size of their existing eyewear business, The Eye Fashion Factory, the Dobyne secured financing from Justine PETERSEN that allowed not only significant upgrades to their facility and the retention of existing employees, but the opportunity for an ophthalmologist to make weekly visits to a neighborhood previously underserved. "What Justine PETERSEN did for us was to take the time to look at our situation and help us carry on," states Mr. Dobyne. "We are not just the Eye Fashion Factory. We are an eye fashion FAMILY."