

Small Business Community Legal Challenges

What's going on?

In the case of Hello Alice, the lawsuit alleges that Hello Alice engaged in unlawful racial discrimination by helping Progressive Insurance award grants to 10 Black-owned small businesses.

Other court filings include:

Alexandre v. Amazon.com, Inc.: White, Asian, and Native Hawaiian plaintiffs, on behalf of a putative class of past and future Amazon “delivery service partner” program (DSP) applicants, challenged a DEI program that provides a \$10,000 grant to qualifying delivery service providers who are “Black, Latinx, and Native American entrepreneurs.” Plaintiffs alleged violations of Section 1981 and California state civil rights law prohibiting discrimination.

- On December 6, 2023, Amazon filed its motion to dismiss the amended complaint. Amazon argued the plaintiffs lack standing because the grant program is only available to DSPs, and the plaintiffs are not DSPs and have never applied to become DSPs.

Do No Harm v. Vituity: On December 8, 2023, Do No Harm, an advocacy group representing doctors and healthcare professionals, sued a nationwide physician partnership, claiming its Bridge to Brilliance Incentive Program—a DEI and recruitment program which advertises a sign-on bonus and benefits specifically to qualified Black physicians—violates Section 1981 and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, which prohibits discrimination by healthcare providers receiving federal financial assistance.

What is the historical context for NAWBO?

For more than 50 years, members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have worked to fortify the women business owner sector—a bipartisan agreement that lifts disadvantaged sectors of our economy and expands our economy as a whole. To this end, we have seen tremendous growth, with women business owners accounting for nearly \$2 trillion in receipts, according to the Census's 2021 Annual Small Business Survey.

What is NAWBO's stance?

It is and has always been NAWBO's mission to propel women entrepreneurs into economic, social and political spheres of power worldwide. We know lifting all sectors of our economy helps build a sustainable American business landscape. NAWBO is proud to stand by women business owners, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or size/type of business, as we continue to work to grow the U.S. economy. NAWBO stays strong through our commitment to our three pillars: advocacy, leadership, and education. Our organization is proud to support programs to increase the economic participation of women business owners, especially those in disadvantaged communities, as we continue to work to develop the U.S. economy. We are working to accomplish these goals on several different fronts:

- Our advocacy agenda always keeps these priorities front and center.
 - Since our inception, NAWBO has been an ardent advocate for increasing access to capital. A recent NAWBO survey shows that only 18% of women-owned businesses have over a million dollars in annual revenue. For women to be on a level playing field with their male counterparts, our business owners must understand how to capitalize on extra funding to grow their businesses. There must be equity for access to capital.
 - NAWBO also advocates for fair and equitable resources for microbusinesses. Nearly 80% of women business owners currently have and are interested in expanding their access to marketing assistance and lead generation through technology and social media. By giving these businesses the resources to grow, we will see an opportunity to increase wealth in our most underserved populations.
- Our educational programming and leadership training also underscore these efforts.
 - We've partnered with AARP through the "Established and Ready to Grow" Accelerator Program. This program is an educational and roundtable discussion series for 40 early-stage women business owners of color over six months.
 - We've developed Launch Right with Wells Fargo—a start-up program for women exiting the workforce in rural regions and marginalized socioeconomic communities through another grant program.
 - NAWBO and Wells Fargo partnered on the Accelerated Growth Program, a series of workshops and peer roundtables to help their businesses thrive.