A Letter to LGBTQ+ Founders and Allies

For nearly 20 years our mission at NGLCC has been to showcase America’s estimated 1.4 million LGBT business owners as innovators, job creators, taxpayers, and providers of essential services that benefit our entire society. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender business owners are a vibrant, indispensable part of the small business engine that makes the U.S. economy run. They truly deserve a place at the equality table. Having invaluable partners over the years like Hello Alice has helped us reach more LGBT entrepreneurs than ever before; and we’re just getting started.

Despite political challenges and the COVID-19 crisis, the growth of our business community has been extraordinary in recent years. We are inspired by the rapid expansion of inclusive policies throughout America’s workforce and supplies chains, especially the recent Supreme Court decision in support of LGBT workplace protections. However, only federal legislation or presidential action will fully ensure that every LGBT business owner has an equal chance to seek every opportunity as everyone else in America. As this report proves, funding our small businesses – both LGBT and allied – remains the top concern we all face. Despite being able to be married and protected in our jobs in all 50 states, more than 30 of them have no access to credit/capital protections for our communities, making it perfectly legal for a bank loan officer to say, “we don’t give money to your kind.”

That is why the data collected and resources shared by this powerful NGLCC and Hello Alice partnership matter more than ever. When it comes to diverse communities — LGBT people, women, people of color, people with disabilities, and more — we must stand in solidarity as a business force. We have never seen greater cooperation and solidarity than we have in recent months. And a great deal of that is due to the recognition that LGBT people are also part of every other community. Only by working together can we ensure essential resources, funding, training, and opportunities reach all communities, helping us all to thrive.

In early 2004, NGLCC created a best-in-class diversity certification program, making us the exclusive national third-party certifying body
for LGBT Business Enterprises (LGBTBEs). If you are an LGBT business owner and not yet certified, that means you’re leaving opportunities on the table to help your business grow. For the LGBT community, that also means missing out on one of our role models, job creators, and future success stories. The process is quick, easy, and can open unprecedented doors of opportunity for you and your business – Get NGLCC LGBTBE Certified Today!

Through certification, you also help us and other leaders to capture the most accurate snapshot possible of the economic progress made by the LGBT community — and remind us of the work yet to be done. As our groundbreaking America’s LGBT Economy report demonstrated, America’s LGBT economic impact is more than $1.7 trillion dollars annually. LGBT-owned businesses are also powerful job creators: 900 LGBT-owned companies we studied created an estimated 33,000 jobs in every type of industry. LGBT entrepreneurs are committed to hiring greater numbers of LGBT employees and ensuring their own supply chains are as diverse as possible.

As both our NGLCC reports and the Hello Alice “Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ Businesses” report here show, business leaders in our community continually redefine industries and shatter stereotypes, even during the toughest of times. From technology firms to local restaurants and retail shops, we are proving every day that if you can buy it, an LGBT-owned business can supply it.

Use the LGBT community’s trillion dollar clout to make a difference. Support your community when you shop, seek out LGBT-owned businesses when you invest, and stand by those who stand with us. We look forward to a long future with Hello Alice and the outstanding business leaders in its network. The great work for economic equality continues, one small business at a time.

Yours in equality and opportunity,
**Hello Alice’s COVID-19 Business Resource Center**

Hello Alice is hosting the COVID-19 Business Resource Center and Industry Hubs ([covid19.helloalice.com](https://covid19.helloalice.com)) in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, eBay Foundation, Global Entrepreneurship Network, Salesforce Essentials, Mastercard, Silicon Valley Bank, Verizon, and UBS. Through the Center, business owners can connect with peers and experts to get the help they need in real time, including comprehensive access to financial support, government programs, real-time policy updates, enterprise discounts, virtual events, and step-by-step guides targeted at specific industries as they prepare to reopen. Hello Alice is providing owners the opportunity to apply for $10,000 COVID-19 Business for All Emergency Grants on a rolling basis that includes mentorship for every applicant. Hello Alice stands with every entrepreneur to ensure #BusinessForAll during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hello Alice believes in the power of data to educate thought leaders on the barriers and opportunities for small business owners. While we never share personal data, we aggregate and share trends to ensure New Majority founders are represented both for their success and the hurdles they overcome. We appreciate the data partnership with NGLCC (National LGBT Chamber of Commerce) for this impact report. Our goal is that enterprise companies, policy makers, and thought leaders utilize this report to better serve the LGBTQ+ small business community. Small business owners, likewise, are encouraged to utilize this data and join us in advocating for the needs of LGBTQ+ business owners.
**Table of Contents**

6 Data on LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses  
7 Current Status of LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses  
8 Top Industries of LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses  
9 Biggest Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses  
10 Biggest Impacts on LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses  
11 Capital Required and Greatest Help  
13 Emergency Funding  
14 Where to Go From Here  
15 About Hello Alice
Data on LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses

LGBTQ+ owners add over $1.7 trillion annually to the economy. In 2015 alone, 900 NGLCC certified LGBTBE (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Business Enterprises) suppliers contributed over $1.15 billion to the U.S. economy.¹

This report compiles data from:

5,201 LGBTQ+ Entrepreneurs

60% identify as women
34% identify as men
4% identify as non-binary
2% identify as non-conforming
0.9% prefer not to say

55% have pivoted their businesses
13.5% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs identify as military-connected

Business Owner: Are you interested in becoming an LGBTQ business enterprise? Check out this helpful video from the NCLCC to get you started.

¹NCLCC America’s LGBT Economy Report
Current Status of LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses

The COVID-19 pandemic presents unprecedented challenges for small business owners. To better understand business owners current needs, the Hello Alice COVID-19 Business for All Emergency Grant application collected demographic information, funding requirements, and operational challenges. The results, collected since March 2020, show that:

- 92% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs are calling on the government to step up and give them access to more emergency grants, ranging from $10,000-$25,000.

- Grants between $10-25k would be put towards many things, including lost sales, as 76% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs said that has been the biggest business impact.

- Grants of that size would be put towards many things, including lost sales, as 76% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs said that was their biggest hurdle during this time of social distancing.

Business Owners: If you are looking for more financial resources for small businesses during COVID-19, check out this free guide for a step-by-step walk through.
Top Industries of LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses

- 15% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs are in the Healthcare/Wellness Industry.
- 14% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs are in the Arts/Entertainment/Recreation Industry.
- 12% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs are in the Professional Business Services Industry.
- 12% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs are in the “Other” Industries, which were not listed in the responses.
- 12% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs are in the Food/Beverage Industry.

**Business Owners:** If you are an LGBTQ+ business and are interested in getting certified, visit NGLCC’s LGBT-Owned Business Enterprise Certification page.
Melody Li is an immigrant, therapist of color, and mental health justice activist. Her journey through living in three countries instilled a deep appreciation for diversity, and heightened awareness towards systemic injustice and oppression. As she observed and experienced the ways that the mental health field neglects and even retraumatizes marginalized communities, she decided to help create change by starting her business, Austin Counseling Collective. Today, she leads a movement as she journeys towards personal healing and growth.

This data mirrors the findings in the NGLCC’s America’s LGBT Economy Report where it is stated that there are 11% of certified LGBTBEs are in the Consulting industry, 10% are in the Marketing industry, 9% are in the Professional Services industry, 5% are in the Events industry, 5% are in the Media industry and 4% are in the Legal industry.
Biggest Impacts on LGBTQ+ Owned Businesses

For LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs, the most common COVID-19 impact has been reduced sales due to the social distancing measures that have been implemented.

- Of the over 5,200 LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs, nearly 4,000 of these entrepreneurs have expressed this to be one of their biggest impacts during this crisis.

Bruno Rose is the Founder of Pack Leaders, a professional dog walking and grooming company based in Atlanta, Georgia. Bruno has explained that the biggest impacts of COVID-19 on his company have been reduced sales due to the declining economy and social distancing. This has shown to be true for a majority of the 7,318 LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs.
Capital Required
And Greatest Help

The overwhelming majority of LGBTQ+ business owners — nearly three out of five — reported they needed emergency funding immediately in order to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. LGBTQ+ Americans are not counted in the U.S. Census and are rarely mentioned in federal economic reports. NGLCC’s LGBT Economy Report is the first-ever extensive and detailed story of LGBTQ+ Economy.¹

1. NCLCC America’s LGBT Economy Report
LGBTQ+ business owners are powerful job creators. In 2017, 900 LGBT-owned companies created an estimated 33,000 jobs. LGBTQ+ owners are more committed to hiring greater numbers of LGBTQ+ employees and focus on creating a supply chain that is as diverse as possible.¹

¹NCLCC America’s LGBT Economy Report
Emergency Funding

The strong majority of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs reported they needed emergency funding immediately.

The type of emergency funds most requested was emergency grants, with over 92% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs needing this type of support from the government.

Emergency grants have been the overwhelmingly most requested funding type from the government for LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs, including Diauna Tyson of Atlanta, Georgia. Diauna is the founder of The Cute Shuttle LLC, an eco-friendly transportation service providing courtesy rides for low-income families, including senior citizens, to resourceful organizations and local food distribution locations across 10 neighborhoods in Atlanta.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Emergency Funding Needs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92%</td>
<td>Support from the government through emergency grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63%</td>
<td>Support from the government through long-term grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61%</td>
<td>Support from the government through rent relief</td>
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<tr>
<td>48%</td>
<td>Support from the government through tax deferrals or waivers</td>
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59% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs said they need emergency funding immediately.

17% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs said they need emergency funding within 2 weeks.

17% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs said they need emergency funding within 30 days.

6% of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs said they need emergency funding within 60 days.
Hello Alice is committed to LGBTQ+ business community during Pride Month — and every month. As the data shows, this community needs more support than ever to overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since our launch in 2017, Hello Alice has hosted resources and opportunities for LGBTQ+ business owners, who make up 7,020 owners on our platform. We are and always will be committed to equal access for LGBTQ+ business owners.

Together we will emerge from this crisis stronger than before.

Finally, Hello Alice recommends the following actions based on our data:

1. More loans and grants. LGBTQ+ business owners overwhelmingly requested emergency grants and access to funding in amounts between $5,000 - $50,000.

2. Hiring a talented team has been the greatest help to LGBTQ+ owners. Efforts providing HR and talent resources to LGBTQ+ owners is critical.

3. The intersectionality of identification within the LGBTQ+ community warrants deeper conversations around support needed for unique segments within this group.

4. Engage with the NGLCC. A leading voice in the LGBTQ+ business community, NGLCC exists to influence public policy, develop new clients, and facilitate supplier diversity goals.
About
Hello Alice

Hello Alice (helloalice.com) helps businesses launch and grow. A free multi-channel platform powered by machine learning, Hello Alice guides business owners by providing access to funding, networks, and services. Through a network of more than 150,000 owners in all 50 states and across the globe, Hello Alice is building the largest community of business owners in the country while tracking data and trends to increase owner success rate. Hello Alice partners with enterprise business services, government agencies, and institutions looking to serve small and medium business owners to ensure increased revenues and to provide the best-possible experience for owners who want to start or grow their companies. Founded in 2017 by Elizabeth Gore and Carolyn Rodz, Hello Alice believes in business for all — by providing access to all owners, especially women, people of color, military connected, the LGBTQ+ community, and persons with disabilities. Hello Alice exists to serve every American with an entrepreneurial spirit.