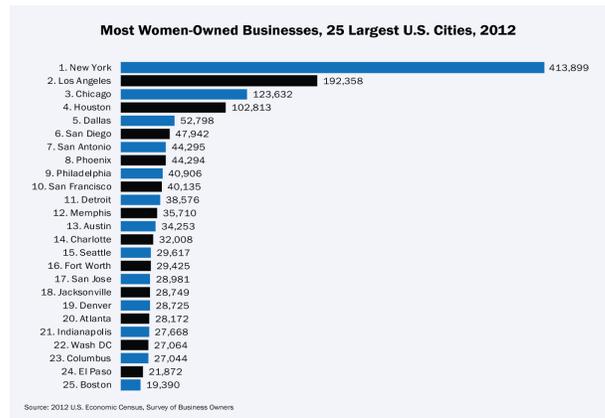# Support Women and Minority Owned Businesses

Seattle can advance smart policies that help small businesses, employees, and the communities they serve, not just by streamlining the process for new and growing small businesses, but by targeting assistance to those most vulnerable to economic instability – women and minorities who want to start and grow small and micro businesses in Seattle.

As we shift Washington State's regressive tax structure towards a more equitable system that benefits communities, workers and small businesses should be able to receive a break in their taxes. Part of that effort should ensure the B&O tax is calculated so that it benefits small businesses.

For small businesses and their employees to thrive, we should eliminate the distraction and worry about health coverage so that small business owners can focus on growing their businesses and serving their communities.[i] While the push at the national level is for Medicare for All (universal healthcare), our goal at the city level is simply for everyone to have access to healthcare regardless of status. In addition to my healthcare proposals, which include working with small to large businesses to establish more healthcare for small business owners, the policies listed below that advance opportunities for women and minority owned small businesses to thrive.

Most Women-Owned Businesses, 25 Largest U.S. Cities, 2012

City	Number
1. New York	413,899
2. Los Angeles	192,358
3. Chicago	123,632
4. Houston	102,813
5. Dallas	52,798
6. San Diego	47,942
7. San Antonio	44,295
8. Phoenix	44,294
9. Philadelphia	40,906
10. San Francisco	40,135
11. Detroit	38,576
12. Memphis	35,710
13. Austin	34,253
14. Charlotte	32,008
15. Seattle	29,617
16. Fort Worth	29,425
17. San Jose	28,981
18. Jacksonville	28,749
19. Denver	28,725
20. Atlanta	28,172
21. Indianapolis	27,668
22. Wash DC	27,064
23. Columbus	27,044
24. El Paso	21,872
25. Boston	19,390

Source: 2012 U.S. Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners

Strategies that Support Women and Minority Business Owners:

The Seattle Times
Gene Balk / FYI Guy
Minority-owned businesses plentiful in Seattle, but diversity is elusive
Originally published September 5, 2016 at 6:00 am | Updated September 6, 2016 at 12:49 pm

- Lift the cap on B&O tax for small businesses to make our system more equitable for small business owners. Small business would be defined by revenue generated, and final policy would be influenced by bringing small/medium businesses to the table.
- Provide technical assistance, incubation zones and ongoing support for small business to have assistance with managing their capital as they grow their business. Continue and expand partnerships with local Microenterprise Development Organizations to increase access to capital and financial capability to these communities.
- Improve access to capital for small business entrepreneurs. Many small business owners don't have access to reliable credit to build their businesses, so we should enhance the programs and revenue to assist for a three-year period. The micro-lending program should create greater stability for women, immigrants and people of color small businesses owners for those hardest first few years.
- Create a licensing process and assistance program specifically for immigrant business owners so they can navigate the system in various languages, and have a liaison help them get the necessary paperwork and approval to star their own business. We should subsidize the cost of this licensing, or defer the cost for small businesses with a sustainable plan and then after a period they can pay the full price of these licenses.
- Mirror Portland's Mercado[ii] program to create space for small businesses to startup, much like the food innovation district envisioned in Rainier Beach that was stalled by a surprise bidder.
- Create a citywide municipal broadband utility, modeled after the success the city has had with Seattle City Light, so that all Seattle residents have fast, affordable internet to help businesses, help workers find job opportunities. Create an education program for new business owners on how get access to needed technology. The creation of a new public internet utility would create strong union jobs here - within the 3rd year of operation, the public utility is projected to employ approximately 250 FTEs with pay from $50,000-$75,000 a year - and make it easier for small businesses to thrive in every corner of our city.[iii]

[i] Main Street Alliance, 2018 Policy Platform (Draft), Oct 23, 2017.
[ii] MicroMercantes for Food Entrepreneurs, http://www.micromercantes.com, Oct 23, 2017.
[iii] Upgrade Seattle, Municiple Broadband Brief, May 17, 2017.