

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY: A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD WITHOUT RED TAPE

Starting a business is hard for anyone. But the challenge is magnified for people of color, women, and rural residents. Many entrepreneurs encounter a confusing web of outdated regulations, ordinances, and permits. And unlike big, established corporations, entrepreneurs lack the means to hire teams of consultants, attorneys, and lobbyists to shape and navigate these complicated systems.

Here's a look at how *America's New Business Plan* recommendations can expand access to opportunity so that all entrepreneurs have a fair shot and level playing field.

Create an Entrepreneurship Impact Statement

- ➔ Require an Entrepreneurship Impact Statement (EIS) for all new laws, regulations, and rules developed that affect businesses less than 5 years old. At the federal level, the EIS would require the Congressional Budget Office and issuing agencies to estimate the direct costs to new businesses of changes to laws and regulations. States and localities would enact and follow similar procedures in their respective jurisdictions.

Streamline the Process of Starting a Business

- ➔ Create a single list of all requirements to start any business and easy-to-understand guides that walk entrepreneurs through the permitting process. These should be translated into multiple languages and posted in public offices and in an easy-to-find location online.
- ➔ Require coordination across agencies to simplify all federal, state, and local procedures, forms, licenses, and permits required to start a business.
- ➔ Create federal and state incentives for local authorities to reduce barriers to starting businesses, even down to the smallest fees and forms.

Remove Debt-Imposed Barriers to Entry

- ➔ Remove debt-imposed barriers to entry, or “debt traps,” that prevent prospective entrepreneurs from obtaining or renewing a business license because of unpaid fines and fees unrelated to the business.
- ➔ Eliminate unreasonable and excessively punitive fines and fees that trap would-be entrepreneurs in cycles of debt.

Improve Connection to the Digital Economy for All Entrepreneurs

- ➔ Create and deploy a national broadband plan to ensure all Americans are connected to the internet with fast, reliable, and affordable service. The plan should build a more competitive broadband marketplace and address the cost of service by ensuring that the Lifeline subsidy for low-income households is adequate to support their access.

Unleash the Job-Creating Power of Immigrant Entrepreneurs

- ➔ Increase the number of employment-based green cards and eliminate the per-country limit for high-skilled immigrants to decrease wait times.
- ➔ Establish a startup visa with a path to permanent residency.

Unlock Entrepreneurial Activity by Reforming Noncompete Agreements

- ➔ Restrict the use of noncompetes through outright bans or by shortening the maximum duration of these contracts and narrowing the scope of industries and jobs for which noncompetes may be used.
- ➔ Improve transparency by requiring employers to disclose their intent to use a noncompete in job postings and offers.

Rein in Occupational Licensing

- ➔ Replace licensing with less onerous forms of regulation, such as certifications or permits, in industries where public health is not seriously threatened.
- ➔ Streamline remaining licensing requirements. States can develop regional or interstate compacts to ensure occupational licenses are transferable to or recognized by neighboring states, just like a driver's license. Federal preemption would accomplish a similar purpose.
- ➔ Reduce blanket bans and “good character” clauses in remaining licensing requirements, which erect barriers to entrepreneurship for the formerly incarcerated.

Visit [StartUsUpNow.org](https://startusupnow.org) to learn more about the policy recommendations of America's New Business Plan.