

# Progressive Insurance®, Hello Alice Award \$1 Million to Small Business Owners

20 recipients will receive funds which can be used toward the purchase of a commercial vehicle for their business and access to programs that help drive business growth

MAYFIELD VILLAGE, Ohio, Sept. 9, 2024 –[Progressive Insurance](#)<sup>®</sup>, the leading commercial auto insurer in the United States, today announced the 2024 recipients of the brand's Driving Small Business Forward grant program in collaboration with Hello Alice in support of small business owners. Each of the 20 recipients will be awarded a \$50,000 grant to use toward the purchase of a commercial vehicle for their business. Some of the 20 recipients' reactions were captured during the announcement, demonstrating the life-changing impact of this program.

## [Behind the scenes look](#)

According to the [Small Business Administration](#), over 33 million firms qualify as a small business, representing 99.9% of all U.S. businesses. This number reflects the significant role small businesses play in generating employment and contributing to economic stability. Progressive fosters progress in business by continuing its commitment to supporting owners and helping them move forward and live fully by offering improved access to capital to fund some of their transportation needs.

"At Progressive, we recognize the small business owners who work so hard to make meaningful contributions to our society yet face many challenges when it comes to access to capital," said Karen Bailo, Commercial Lines President at Progressive Insurance. "For the last three years, the Driving Small Business Forward grant program is one of the ways we've been supporting entrepreneurs on their small business journey, and we are proud to continue facilitating progress in business as part of our belief that insurance should do more."

To administer the grant program, Progressive worked with [Hello Alice](#), the financial technology platform connecting over 1.5 million small businesses to capital, connections, and opportunities.

The full list of recipients for the 2024 Driving Small Business Forward grant program are:

- James Dong, Owner of [Last Minute Gear](#) in San Francisco, CA
- Vernic Popat, Owner of [PlantOGram Inc](#) in Orlando, FL
- Dermot Jones, Owner of [Jones Family Bee Removal](#) in Antioch, CA
- Colin Wiseman, Owner of [Chai For](#) in Cincinnati, OH
- Ikey McCoy, Owner of [McCoy Masonry LLC](#) in Shaker Heights, OH
- Jarami Bond, Owner of [Bond Studio](#) in Charlotte, NC
- Charles Zhang, Owner of [Blue Hawaii Lifestyle](#) in Honolulu, HI
- Charmaine Gahan, Owner of [Cuttyhunk Shellfish Farms](#) in Concord, MA
- David & Mary Rodriguez, Owners of [The Oven Pizzeria](#) in Seaside, CA
- Shawn Jonutz, Owner of [Wind & Brass](#) in Berkeley, CA
- Holly Verbeck, Owner of [HeyChef! LLC](#) in Truckee, CA
- Xiaoyuan Su, Owner of [Chinese Radio Seattle](#) in Bellevue, WA
- Adell Badgett, Owner of [Dellstar VR L.L.C.](#) in South Bend, IN
- Mariam Gogeliya, Owner of [Wonder Room Coffee & Flowers](#) in Brooklyn, NY
- Jose & Michelle O'Quinn, Owner of [Street Wise Driving Schools](#) in Grand Prairie, TX

- Sharie Renee, Owner of [Cosmic Bobbins](#) in Cleveland, OH
- Erica Cole, Owner of [No Limbits](#) in Richmond, VA
- Chevonne Woodard, Owner of [Mr. Appliance of West Loop](#) in Chicago, IL
- Frederique Mitchell, Owner of [Cookies By Freddie](#) in Baton Rouge, LA
- Stacey Cline, Owner of [New Earth Farm / CompostSTL](#) in St. Louis, MO

#### [Meet a few of our 2024 grant recipients.](#)

Selected recipients submitted applications highlighting the impact their business has on the local community. Erica Cole is the owner of No Limbits in Richmond, VA and leads a team of people with disabilities creating products to help those with disabilities live life without limits.

"I am so thrilled to have been selected for this grant as it will allow us to engage even more with the disability community," said Erica Cole, owner of No Limbits. "We plan to use this grant to purchase a commercial vehicle to host pop-up events at our retailers, clinical partners and adaptive community events to reach customers in a fun and authentic way."

Another applicant, Dermot Jones, Owner of Jones Family Bee Removal in Antioch, CA has dedicated his company to spreading awareness about the importance of bees and their role in our ecosystem.

"Small businesses are the heart of this country, but it's become increasingly difficult for them to operate and scale with the challenges today's economic environment presents. Hello Alice has helped many of these small business owners' access much needed capital, credit, and opportunities to thrive and support their communities," said Carolyn Rodz, CEO & Co-Founder of Hello Alice. "We're proud to work with Progressive on this important grant program and continue championing small businesses."

To learn more about each recipient, visit <https://helloalice.com/grants/progressive/>.

In addition to receiving a grant toward the purchase of a commercial vehicle, recipients will have the opportunity to participate in Boost Camp, a business coaching program from Hello Alice that instills repeatable annual frameworks that focus on core concepts for business growth including financial budgeting and forecasting, funding and pitch strategies, sales and customer acquisition.

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#### About Progressive

Progressive Insurance® makes it easy to understand, buy and use [car insurance](#), [home insurance](#), and other protection needs. Progressive offers choices so consumers can reach us however it's most convenient for them — online at [progressive.com](https://www.progressive.com), by phone at 1-800-PROGRESSIVE, via the Progressive mobile app, or in-person with a local agent.

Progressive provides insurance for personal and commercial autos and trucks, motorcycles, boats, recreational vehicles, and homes; it is the second largest personal auto insurer in the country, a leading seller of [commercial](#) auto, [motorcycle](#), and [boat](#) insurance, and one of the top 15 homeowners insurance carriers.

Founded in 1937, Progressive continues its long history of offering shopping tools and services that save customers time and money, like Name Your Price®, Snapshot®, and HomeQuote Explorer®.

The Common Shares of The Progressive Corporation, the Mayfield Village, Ohio-based holding company, trade publicly at NYSE: PGR.

#### About Hello Alice

Hello Alice is a financial technology platform serving more than 1.5 million small business owners in all fifty states. Hello Alice is committed to equitable access to capital and to supporting any entrepreneur with a good idea. Hello Alice offers funding, education, tools, and curated opportunities. Working with enterprise business services, ecosystem partners, affiliates, and government agencies, Hello Alice provides its growing community with everything they need to grow their businesses. To learn more, visit [www.helloalice.com](https://www.helloalice.com), as well as [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).