



Black Business Community

All sectors of the community are urged to support African American business and business development throughout the region. The goal should include the development, implementation and maintenance of community-based businesses and employment initiatives that will create and establish viable businesses and living wage career and employment opportunities in and around designated African American communities. This should include the establishment of Community Business Development Centers, community commercial corridors and industrial parks. Such support will result in stronger and more viable businesses, thereby leading to additional employment opportunities for both adults and youth and giving them a viable alternative to violence.

Individual Community Members should:

- **Develop** the knowledge and skills to maximize their potential for becoming financially independent through continued learning and career exploration. Financial security and the creation of wealth strengthen the economic community while generating jobs and creating new career opportunities.
- **Support** businesses in their particular neighborhoods, as business is important to the viability of any community.
- **Respect** the rights of businesses by not loitering or engaging in suspicious or illegal activities in front of those businesses. Individuals should act in a manner that encourages the community to support businesses, including helping to create a family- friendly atmosphere.
- **Report** illegal or suspicious activities around stores and other to community businesses to policing organizations and/or law enforcement.
- **Realize** that the implementation of the above stated goals will lead to a more viable and healthy atmosphere in which African American businesses can flourish.

The Black Business Community should:

- **Develop** a coordinated Community Business Development Network within the African American communities most impacted by violence.
- **Create** a Resident Employment Database initiative that identifies the talents, abilities, and capabilities of each community resident. Such a database would serve as a source of prospective employees for participating businesses. Voluntary support for, and contribution to, the database will increase the success of this initiative.
- **Seek** to employ the employable, and to encourage and train community residents who have been deemed “unemployable.” Access the above-referenced resident employment database for potential employees.

- **Create** and develop African American businesses that have the capacity to hire full-time workers and provide career training and benefit packages for their employees.
- **Utilize** youth workforce initiatives sponsored by agencies, schools, community and/or faith-based organizations that provide education, training, internships, apprenticeships, and/or employment. Continued support of these initiatives could also increase the reintegration of youth who have been expelled, who have dropped out or who have graduated from school without basic skills.
- **Build** and strengthen the relationships between businesses and community youth by providing mentoring, training, and employment.
- **Provide** partnering and mentoring opportunities for existing and emerging businesses owned by African Americans and other people of color. Existing successful businesses can provide these opportunities.
- **Advocate** for new and emerging, or current, African American businesses to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by professional business organizations such as the African American Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Minority and Women Business Enterprise community and any other such entities.
- **Encourage** established business organizations, such as the African American Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Minority and Women Business Enterprise community, to aggressively pursue working relationships with current, new, and emerging businesses in the African American community. Encourage such organizations to be accountable to the communities they serve.
- **Advertise** job openings and other opportunities in media used by the Black community.
- **Establish** training for every employee to nurture professionalism and professional behavior within their business surroundings. The establishment and enforcement of such professional behavior will lead to the creation of successful black businesses that will attract not only the African American community, but other communities as well.

Local Government and Foundations should:

- **Fund** programs providing business education, leadership training and work experience directed toward area student populations.
- **Provide** opportunities for African Americans and other people of color who wish to start their own businesses including start-up information, business plan development, and funding.
- **Demand** accountability for funds distributed to new and existing grant recipients, including reports of services provided and results, including job placements and the financial status of each business venture.
- **Develop** policies and legislation that will maintain communities and prevent disenfranchisement of voting blocs, thereby strengthening the participation of African American communities to reduce the level of frustration that leads to violence
- **Provide** safety support systems that will allow African American businesses to operate successfully in an atmosphere of peace and security.

- **Encourage** and strengthen youth workforce initiatives to allow increased placement of youth with African American owned businesses. Such support will allow Black businesses to expand and become more productive.

Educational Institutions should:

- **Provide** more opportunities for middle and high school students to learn about the business world through both classroom learning and structured work experiences. Such support will improve their economic opportunities and give them a viable alternative to violence.
- **Continue** the institutional role in economic development by addressing the region's professional and support workforce needs through the continual development of new and expanded curriculum and training programs targeted to needed skill sets. Provide technical assistance to businesses, facilitating entrepreneurial training and creating new companies through technology transfer.

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