



The Minority Empowerment Program (MEP) is an initiative of the Chamber designed to bring Black and Hispanic owned and led businesses and nonprofits into the community conversation through Chamber membership, resulting in a more inclusive environment and approach toward business growth throughout the region. As a program under the Tampa Bay Chamber’s “Inclusive Organization” pillar, MEP strives to create an environment where all feel welcome.

Along with the benefits of a **Tier 3 Chamber Membership**, participants also receive quarterly specialized programming, invitations to special sessions, and networking events with the Chamber’s Minority Business Accelerator participants.

SPONSORS



AT&T



BANK OF AMERICA



Florida Natural Gas



REGIONS



Tampa Bay Food Trucks

Corey Thomas

Julian W. Waits Sr.



PURPOSE

AT&T, a member of the Tampa Bay Chamber, approached the Chamber about creating a program that would increase the participation and relationships of Black and Hispanic owned and led businesses and non-profits.

AT&T, Amgen, Moffitt Cancer Center, Corey Thomas, Julian Waites Sr., Bush Ross, Regions Bank, Florida Natural Gas, Bank of America and Tampa Bay Food Trucks all funded the **third** year of the MEP program.

The goal of the Minority Empowerment Program is to welcome more Black and Hispanic businesses and nonprofits into chamber membership, making the Chamber organization better positioned to listen to the input, and to represent the perspectives, of Black and Hispanic owned organizations that are vital to the economic and social health of the Tampa Bay area. Resulting in a more inclusive and equitable approach toward business growth and community engagement throughout the region, while also connecting more businesses with Chamber resources for growth and development.

IMPACT SUCCESSES

- » The sponsors of the 2023 Minority Empowerment Program provided 19 one-year FIT3 (top tier) Chamber memberships to Black and Hispanic owned businesses and non-profits that were not already chamber members.
- » Participants attended an Orientation to learn about programs, events and initiatives that are available to them to engage with the Chamber while expanding their professional relationships and connections.
- » 19 companies were identified as excellent candidates for this year long program that is designed to scale business development and growth.
- » Participants are encouraged to attend premier networking events.
- » Personal connections are facilitated at Business Around the Bay, a small group of business leader's roundtable discussion to cover a variety of topics.
- » Direct business connections led to new business opportunities including MEP to MEP partnerships and MEP to member partnerships.



SESSIONS

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|--|
| Jan. 18 | | » MBA Orientation "Welcome to the Tampa Bay Chamber" |
| Feb. 15 | Quarter 1 | » Financial Literacy |
| May 16 | Quarter 2 | » Business Planning and Marketing |
| Aug. 16 | Quarter 3 | » Legal |
| Nov. 1 | Quarter 4 | » Certifications (City/County) - End of Year Session |

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

This session introduced our businesses owners to how to navigate certifications, bids and proposals with the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County. During this session resources and information pertaining to the procurement process were also presented by our full panel of subject matter experts. Understanding how to do business with the city and county connected our program companies with future opportunities to grow their businesses.

Presenters

City of Tampa

- » CT Harris - Small Business Navigator, Economic Opportunity
- » Katrina House, NIGP-CPP, CPPB, PPA - Certified Procurement Analyst, Purchasing Department

Hillsborough County

- » Gwen Sevaaetasi, CCA - Special Projects Coordinato, MBE/SBE Programs, Economic Development
- » Amy Rench - Supplier Engagement Coordinator, Hillsborough County BOCC Procurement Services.

Recommendations

Video

- » Mindshift on YouTube for motivation

Podcasts

- » Earn your leisure
- » Cardone Zone
- » Oprah's Master Class to name a few.

Books

- » The Alchemist (absolute favorite)
- » The 10X Rule
- » Nice Girls Don't Get The Corner Office
- » Atomic Habits
- » 7 Habits of Highly effective people.



2023 PARTICIPANTS



2023 Chair

Lennise Jackson-Germany
CEO
LivyO's Catering



100 Black Men of Tampa Bay, Inc.

Phalen Brown, Secretary



The Color of Wellness Media

Michelle Rhodes, CEO



Creamy Crack Body Cream

Camille Cook, Nurse Practitioner, CEO and Founder



Creative Growth Services

Maria Ivana Ramirez, Founder and CEO



Edward Jones Advisor

Natalie Freeman, Financial Advisor



Halo Solutions, LLC

Meloni Waller, Partner

Imperial Cabinets & Millwork

Leroy Goodman



Kidney Care Coaches
Tifro Cook, Founder and CEO



M & R Catering
Maria Rumlin



The Mainframe
James Faison, Founder and CEO



The Management Suite
Monique McLeod

MB Strategies
Maya Brown, Founder/CEO



Rolanda McDuffie CPA
Rolanda McDuffie, Founder and CEO

The Spa by Folashade
Folashade Oyegunle



Spanish Consultants Inc.
Lorena Rincon, Assistant Operations Director



Vikings Junk Removal

Luis Serrano, Co-Founder



We Think Marketing Group, Inc.

Carlos Aguirre, Owner



Wing Boys Deli

Angelica Torres, Owner



zSofTech Solutions

Leticia Alexander, CEO



2023 PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHTS

The Color of Wellness Media

- » Contracted with Apple TV for culturally competent patient education.

Creative Growth Services

- » Accepted for the Evolve Business Accelerator Program at USF for the year 2024.
- » Gained new customers and contracts for Q4.

Natalie Freeman: Edward Jones

- » Invited to present to the minority employees of the Federal Aviation Authority to proactively prepare for the potential government shutdown.
- » Began Season Three of my podcast.
- » Chosen to be the voiceover artist for the promotional videos for two major Tampa events.
- » Celebrated the 2023 accomplishments by taking a Hawaiian vacation.

M&R Catering

- » Debuted our new spice line. It's called the Petty Chef spice line and we have made our Beef and poultry season available for purchase.



- » We were also just featured on Fox 13 sharing our delicious meatloaf and creamy mashed potatoes.
- » We were also selected as one of the replicants to receive a \$10,000 grant and restaurant management from feed the soul foundation.



— COMMUNITY PARTNER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES —

Moffitt Cancer Center

Ongoing Bid/RFP Opportunities with Moffitt Cancer Center.

FDOT DBE & Small Business Networking Symposium

Learn How To Do Business with FDOT and Prime Contractors. Receive Information Regarding FDOT's Current and Future Projects.

Workshops on Financing & Business Resources, Estimating & Bidding, Bonding, and How to Become DBE Certified

SBDC Event

Show Me the Money: Financing Your Business - Are you looking for money for your business? Are you considering a SBA loan? This seminar will help you zero in on the right funding choices for your business and avoid money scams. Our financing veteran will educate you on how to ask for a loan, get prepared for the bank and where to find money in a tight-fisted economy

Business & Financial Health Workshop

A live & interactive business & financial health workshop for high achieving business owners to set up a strong 2024. As a high achiever and as a business owner, financial health is top priority. One of the most invaluable things you can do as a business owner is understanding your personal and business financial VITALS so you can plan for 2024 effectively. Brought to you by #2024STRONG

Florida State Minority Supplier Development Council (FSMSDC)

2023 Business Opportunity Procurement Summit. Continual opportunities to attend the events and programs through the FSMSDC.

Fifth Third Bank

Ongoing invitations to attend the Third Thursday Events. Monthly events that support education, networking and building your business.