

*Celebrating CBCC's 40th Anniversary*

# THE ACUMEN

July 2025

## UNFILTERED & UNDENIABLE

A Conversation With  
Gloria Neal

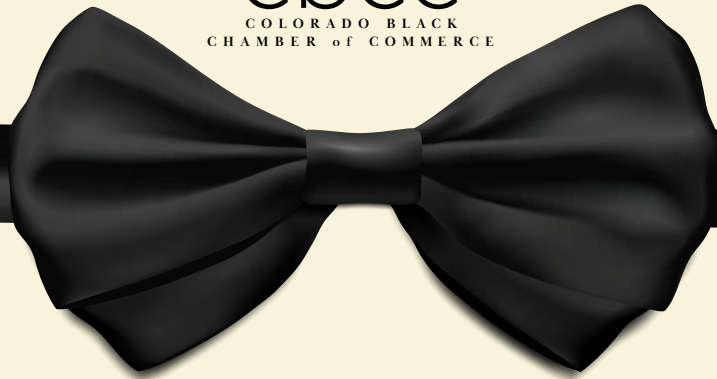
BY DR. ANGELIC COLE

THE BUSINESS OF  
POLITICS  
KHADIJA HAYNES

PURPOSE, POWER, &  
POSSIBILITY  
PORTIA PRESCOTT

WHERE EQUITY MEETS  
EXECUTION  
MAXINE HARRIS

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COLORADO BLACK  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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# 40th Anniversary Gala



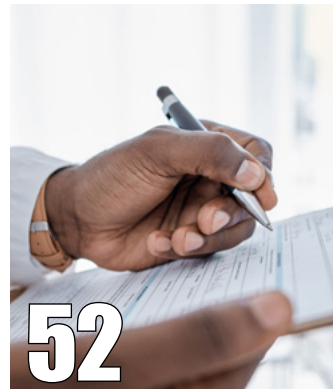
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# CONTENTS



**5**  
**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

Dr. Angelic Cole explains how cooperatives can lead to economic empowerment.

**8**  
**THE BUSINESS OF...**

Khadija Haynes explains why Black communities must engage with politics.

**12**  
**EQUITY AND EXECUTION**

Maxx Impact Group shares how they are reshaping the workforce for the future.

**22**  
**LIVING OUT LOUD**

A conversation about leadership and speaking up with Gloria Neal.

**30**  
**THRIVING IN PURPOSE**

Prescott Solutions dives deep into ensuring their mission enables all to thrive.

**46**  
**COMMUNITY HEALTH**

The Black Community Health Assessment launches soon and needs your info.

**52**  
**ASK YOUR DOCTOR**

The Alzheimer's Association shares questions to ask if memory issues are a concern.

**54**  
**BUSINESS ON THE MOVE**

Green ICE offers a more sustainable way to power your events.

**FACILITATOR: GENE DURAN, PHD, MHA, CPH**

**STATE OF BLACK HEALTH IN DENVER, CO**

Join us as we launch the Black Community Health Assessment (BCHA) with a panel discussion, community feedback session, free health screenings and health information from community partners. Lunch provided by Black Tie Catering.

**7/26/25 11AM-3PM**

**Center for African American Health**  
3350 Hudson St.  
Denver, CO. 80207

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[TheAcumen@cbcc.biz](mailto:TheAcumen@cbcc.biz)

# President's Corner

## The International Day of Cooperatives: A Catalyst for Minority Business Empowerment

Dear Reader:

Every year, on the first Saturday of July, communities across the world observe the International Day of Cooperatives—a day dedicated to celebrating the principles of cooperation, economic inclusion, and shared prosperity. Cooperatives, ranging from financial institutions to community-driven enterprises, play a vital role in supporting minority businesses, providing them with access to capital, networks, and sustainable business models that emphasize collective success.

For minority entrepreneurs facing systemic barriers, cooperatives offer a unique pathway to economic empowerment, fostering business growth while reinforcing community wealth. In this column, we explore how the cooperative movement contributes to minority business success, examining historical impacts, key benefits, and strategies to harness cooperative power for broader economic inclusion.

### The Cooperative Model: A Foundation for Equity

Cooperatives differ from traditional business structures in one fundamental way: they are owned and operated by their members for their mutual benefit rather than for external shareholders. This structure provides several advantages to minority entrepreneurs:

1. **Democratic Governance:** Each member has an equal say in business decisions, ensuring diverse voices are represented in leadership.
2. **Shared Resources:** Cooperatives pool funds and expertise, reducing barriers to entry for minority-owned businesses.
3. **Economic Resilience:** By prioritizing long-term stability over short-term profits, cooperatives can withstand financial downturns and external economic pressures.
4. **Social Impact:** Minority communities often experience higher economic instability, and cooperatives ensure profits are reinvested to create opportunities within those communities.



Historically, cooperatives have played a critical role in empowering marginalized business owners, from Black-run credit unions in the United States to worker-owned cooperatives in Latin America that provide sustainable employment. These models offer an alternative to the competitive, winner-takes-all business landscape, fostering sustainable, collective success.

### The Role of Cooperatives in Minority Business Growth

For minority entrepreneurs, cooperatives unlock several key opportunities:

1. **Access to Capital**  
Many minority business owners face discrimination in lending, limiting their ability to grow. Cooperative financial institutions—including credit unions and loan collectives—circumvent traditional banking barriers by prioritizing community-based financing models. Black-owned credit unions, for instance, have long provided access to capital without the bias associated with large banking institutions.
2. **Business Mentorship & Support**  
Cooperatives encourage knowledge sharing, connecting minority entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders who offer mentoring and technical assistance. This collective intelligence helps owners navigate challenges such as regulatory compliance, marketing strategies, and operational efficiency.

## **President's Corner** *continued.*

- 3. Market Access & Customer Base Expansion**  
Through cooperative memberships, minority businesses gain built-in customer networks. Food cooperatives, worker collectives, and business associations create shared marketplaces, allowing members to sell goods and services within a trusted ecosystem, reducing dependence on large corporations.
- 4. Policy Advocacy & Economic Justice**  
Cooperatives foster collective advocacy, giving minority entrepreneurs a stronger voice in policy discussions. Through industry alliances, cooperatives pressure policymakers to implement equitable business policies, combatting racial wealth gaps and pushing for more inclusive economic frameworks.
- 1. Strengthening Cooperative Education**  
Educating entrepreneurs about cooperative models is key to increasing participation. Schools, business associations, and community organizations should integrate cooperative business training programs to emphasize their viability.
- 2. Government & Institutional Support**  
Stronger legislative backing is needed to reduce financial barriers for minority-owned cooperatives. Policy initiatives, such as grant programs and tax incentives, can bolster cooperative formation and sustainability.
- 3. Expanding Minority-Led Cooperative Networks**  
Creating regional cooperative alliances allows minority businesses to leverage collective power, ensuring that resources, knowledge, and advocacy efforts benefit wider communities.

### **Success Stories: Cooperatives Driving Minority Entrepreneurship**

#### **The Federation of Southern Cooperatives (United States)**

Founded in 1967, the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives** has supported Black farmers and minority entrepreneurs through shared agricultural and business resources. By pooling financial support, the federation has preserved Black land ownership, ensuring generational wealth in historically underserved communities.

#### **Mondragón Corporation (Spain)**

Although not minority-specific, the Mondragón worker cooperative system offers an inspiring blueprint for economic inclusivity. Operating under principles of collective management, Mondragón has helped thousands of workers in Spain—many from disadvantaged backgrounds—own businesses without relying on external investors.

#### **Cooperation Jackson (Mississippi, USA)**

This initiative promotes Black economic empowerment by establishing worker-owned businesses and cooperative housing developments. Cooperation Jackson proves that cooperative models can counteract systemic inequality, creating wealth-building opportunities for marginalized entrepreneurs.

### **Challenges & Solutions for Minority-Owned Cooperatives**

Despite their benefits, minority cooperatives face hurdles, including limited public awareness, bureaucratic obstacles, and initial funding shortages. To maximize their impact, minority businesses must adopt the following strategies:

### **The Future of Cooperatives & Minority Business Ownership**

As global economic trends shift toward community-driven models, cooperatives will continue bridging the gap for minority entrepreneurs. Whether through worker ownership, shared capital models, or cooperative marketplaces, these business structures reinforce economic equity, transforming business ownership into an inclusive, community-focused endeavor.

For minority business owners, embracing the cooperative movement is not just a strategy for survival—it is a blueprint for thriving.

### **Conclusion**

The International Day of Cooperatives reminds us that collaborative economies are the future. Minority businesses, often facing financial and systemic barriers, can find resilience within cooperative structures, creating a new paradigm of ownership, economic fairness, and lasting community impact.

If we prioritize cooperative-led entrepreneurship, we redefine success—not as individual wealth, but as collective prosperity.

**Dr. Angelic Cole**  
**President & CEO**  
Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce

# Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce

## CONNECT. GROW. THRIVE.

CBCC empowers African American-owned businesses and the communities they serve by providing access to economic opportunities, advocacy, and a strong network of professionals.

### Benefits of Membership

Empowering Programs & Services that support business growth, including our signature Special Interest Groups.

Exclusive Networking with Black professionals, entrepreneurs, and corporate partners.

Resources & Advocacy that foster economic development for Black-owned businesses and their communities.

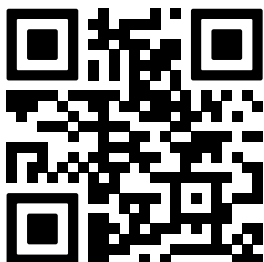
Strategic Partnerships with corporations that strengthen the Black business ecosystem.

**Looking to meet like-minded individuals?  
Learn more about our Special Interest Groups.**

- » Black Construction Group
- » Black Professional Services Group
- » Black Retailer's Group



At CBCC, we're not just a network—we're your partner in building a thriving business and community. For more information, email us: [contact@cbcc.biz](mailto:contact@cbcc.biz)



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COLORADO BLACK  
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

# The Business of Politics Is Real—And Colorado’s Black Communities Must Engage It

By KHADIJA HAYNES

In Colorado and across the country, politics is often talked about as public service. But let’s be honest: it’s also a business. A booming, well-funded, highly organized business. And if Colorado’s Black communities want to see real change—not just promises at election time—we need to understand how this business works, and more importantly, how to move within it.

Here’s the truth: every campaign you see, from city council to Congress, runs like a small corporation. Candidates need money, marketing, consultants, digital strategies, and data operations. The 2023 Denver municipal elections alone brought in millions in campaign contributions, much of it from outside the communities most affected by the issues—affordable housing, economic equity, policing, and public education.

Meanwhile, political consultants and lobbying firms shape policies at every level—from Capitol Hill to the Colorado General Assembly. These firms get paid to advance the agendas of those who can afford their services. If we’re not at that table, we’re not even on the menu.

And yet, Black voters in Colorado often show up. We organize. We protest. We turn out. But we’re rarely the ones writing the checks, making the hires, or setting the terms of debate. That’s not a coincidence. It’s how the business of politics was built.

To be clear: this isn’t about cynicism. It’s about clarity.

We have to stop seeing politics as something that only happens during elections. It’s an everyday, full-time business that requires investment, strategy, and ownership. And just like any industry—media, real estate, tech—if we’re not participating in the economics of it, we’re not truly shaping it.

That means more Black-owned firms involved in political consulting. More Black entrepreneurs and civic groups pooling resources to fund candidates who reflect our values. More intentional lobbying—yes, lobbying—for issues like reparations, land access, education equity, and public safety reform. It means creating political education hubs that train the next generation not just to vote, but to run, fund, and govern.

Colorado has the talent. We have the history. From Five Points to Aurora, from the Western Slope to the Capitol steps, our communities have always fought for dignity and representation. Now it’s time to turn power into infrastructure.

The business of politics isn’t going away. So let’s make sure we’re not just the target audience—we’re also the shareholders.

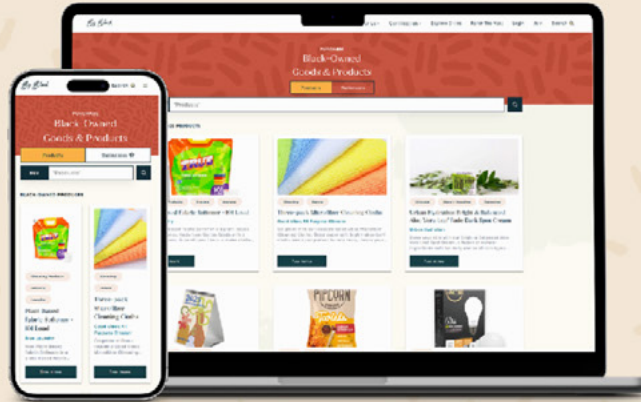
Because politics shouldn’t just be something done to us. It should be something shaped by us.



**Khadija K. Haynes**  
*Photo: McBoat Photography.*

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Are you a conscious consumer looking for meaningful ways to support Black-owned businesses?



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[Dr. Angelic.Cole@cbcc.biz](mailto:Dr.Angelic.Cole@cbcc.biz)



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# GET INVOLVED

## JOIN A COMMITTEE:

- **Business Policy Cabinet with Senator James Coleman**  
First Thursdays, 3pm MT. Starts April 4th
- **CBCC Public Policy Committee**  
Second Mondays, 4pm MT. Starts April 8th
- **CBCC Membership Committee**  
Third Tuesdays, 3pm MT. Starts April 16th
- **Gala Committee**  
Fridays, times To Be Determined



FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
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# Maxx Impact Group is Reshaping the Future of Inclusive Infrastructure

By MAXINE HARRIS







Image: Maxx Impact Group.

*“People are depending on us to carve out an opportunity and make a space or make room for them, for them to get a job, to get a contract, to feed their families. We have clients who want to make more of a difference on projects and within the community. They are all depending on us to do our job and to do it well. For me, it’s mission work, so I don’t take it lightly.” – Maxine Harris*

Maxx Impact Group (MIG) is a nationally recognized management consulting firm based in Denver, CO. The firm specializes in innovative program development and overseeing initiatives that integrate equitable principles into the built environment. The company has over 20 employees and offices in five states.

MIG specializes in inclusive administration and management of strategic supply chain programs,

along with robust workforce development and collaborative project management. Their services include supplier procurement, compliance, community and stakeholder engagement strategies, program and policy development, strategic planning, capacity building, and marketing communications.

Local business leader, Maxine Harris, founded the Maxx Impact Group in 2018 to address significant entry barriers, access challenges, and information gaps. The MIG mission is focused on fostering understanding, building community, and creating opportunities for everyone. Its goal is to convey a clear and urgent message focused on compassion, unity, and service, with a commitment to placing innovation, collaboration, and the human element at the center of its vision and path forward.

**MAXX IMPACT GROUP BELIEVES THAT CAPACITY BUILDING AND DIVERSITY ARE ESSENTIAL IN THE WORKPLACE. HERE ARE A FEW REASONS WHY:**

- Groups formerly considered “minorities” may reach majority status by 2045.
- 48 percent of Generation Z are racial or ethnic minorities.
- Diverse management has been shown to increase revenue by 19 percent.
- In 2022, only six Fortune 500 companies had a Black CEO.
- In 2023, only 10.4% of Fortune 500 companies are led by women.
- Women’s median earnings in 2022 were 83% of men’s.
- Corporations identified as more diverse and inclusive are 35% more likely to outperform their competitors.
- Diverse teams are 70% more likely to capture

new markets.

- Diverse teams are 87% better at making decisions.
- Diverse management teams lead to 19% higher revenue.

[\\*BuiltIn Statistics](#)

**COMPANY OVERVIEW**

MIG’s program management, administration, and oversight focus on various industry sectors, including government, aviation, technology, transportation/transit, construction, higher education, and nonprofits. It works with businesses of all sizes—federal, state, and local—to develop, implement, and manage capacity-building programs focused on achieving operational excellence, optimized productivity, and high performance.



Image: Maxx Impact Group.

The organization assists companies in building capacity, ensuring regulatory compliance, and enhancing their impact by fostering highly collaborative programs and project environments. This involves establishing strategic governance and oversight of programs, as well as managing projects throughout the entire project lifecycle—from Notice to Proceed (NTP) to project closeout. This approach guarantees that the company fulfills the various goals and objectives of our clients through intentional project planning, strategic implementation, oversight, and successful completion.

Maxx Impact Group is dedicated to building a business ecosystem that reflects the diversity of the global community. It aims to foster an environment that serves and benefits everyone, which is a fundamental aspect of its values. This commitment drives its efforts to generate meaningful economic opportunities in the marketplace.

**Project Value Managed: \$5B**  
**Community Outreach Events: 1,000+**  
**Average (MWBE) Diverse Firm Utilization: 28%**

## COMPANY SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

### Project Management

The company employs a three-culture approach that helps organizations strengthen community connections, gain valuable insights to enhance their inclusive culture, and leverage our industry expertise to identify and support internal champions for lasting impact. Consequently, clients receive support in meeting programming requirements and owner demands, frequently exceeding expectations.

Their proactive strategy enables them to link organizational goals with meaningful actions that establish effective practices and transformative outcomes. Ultimately, initiatives are introduced that drive results from both the top and the inside.

This approach ensures it meets clients' goals and objectives through strategic project planning, implementation, oversight, and successful completion.



Image: Maxx Impact Group.



- 01 | Organization**  
Tap into and align advanced insights that improve company culture and outcomes
- 02 | Community**  
Help clients build greater community connections with authenticity and excitement
- 03 | Industry**  
Apply industry knowledge to better position themselves and expand representation

*Graphic: Maxx Impact Group.*

### Workforce Development

MIG is dedicated to workforce development with expertise in the various industries, particularly the construction industry. The company emphasizes a holistic approach through recruiting and referrals, training and upskilling, professional development, community and stakeholder engagement, apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities, and technical assistance.

This strategy cultivates a skilled and diverse workforce that enhances project success, elevates industry standards, and supports job seekers looking to gain entry into historically exclusive careers and industries. The company’s commitment extends beyond supporting those who build structures; they are focused on building the individuals who participate in creating sustainable, equitable, and inclusive futures for the construction sector and those they build with and for.

#### Workforce Development Stats

**Workforce Development Outreach Events Hosted / Attended: 143**  
**Apprentices Employed on Client Projects 112**  
**Job Seekers Screened on Client Projects: 210**

### Supply Chain Inclusion (SCI)

It is well-documented that a diverse supplier base enhances the supply chain, improves decision-making, and contributes to business success and sustainability. MIG partners with suppliers from underrepresented groups, including small, minority-owned, and women-owned companies, to reflect the diversity of our community. Driving innovative and effective supplier diversity initiatives fosters relationships that enable various suppliers to grow and scale, promote upward economic mobility, and create a more intentional and inclusive business environment.

**Measurable Goals and Accountability:** MIG sets measurable goals for supplier diversity and monitors our progress, ensuring accountability and commitment to these initiatives.

#### Supplier Diversity Statistics

**Average Diverse Firm Utilization Rate: 20%**  
**Total Diverse Firms Committed Contract Value to Date: \$380 M**  
**Total Contracts Awarded to Diverse Firms: 675**

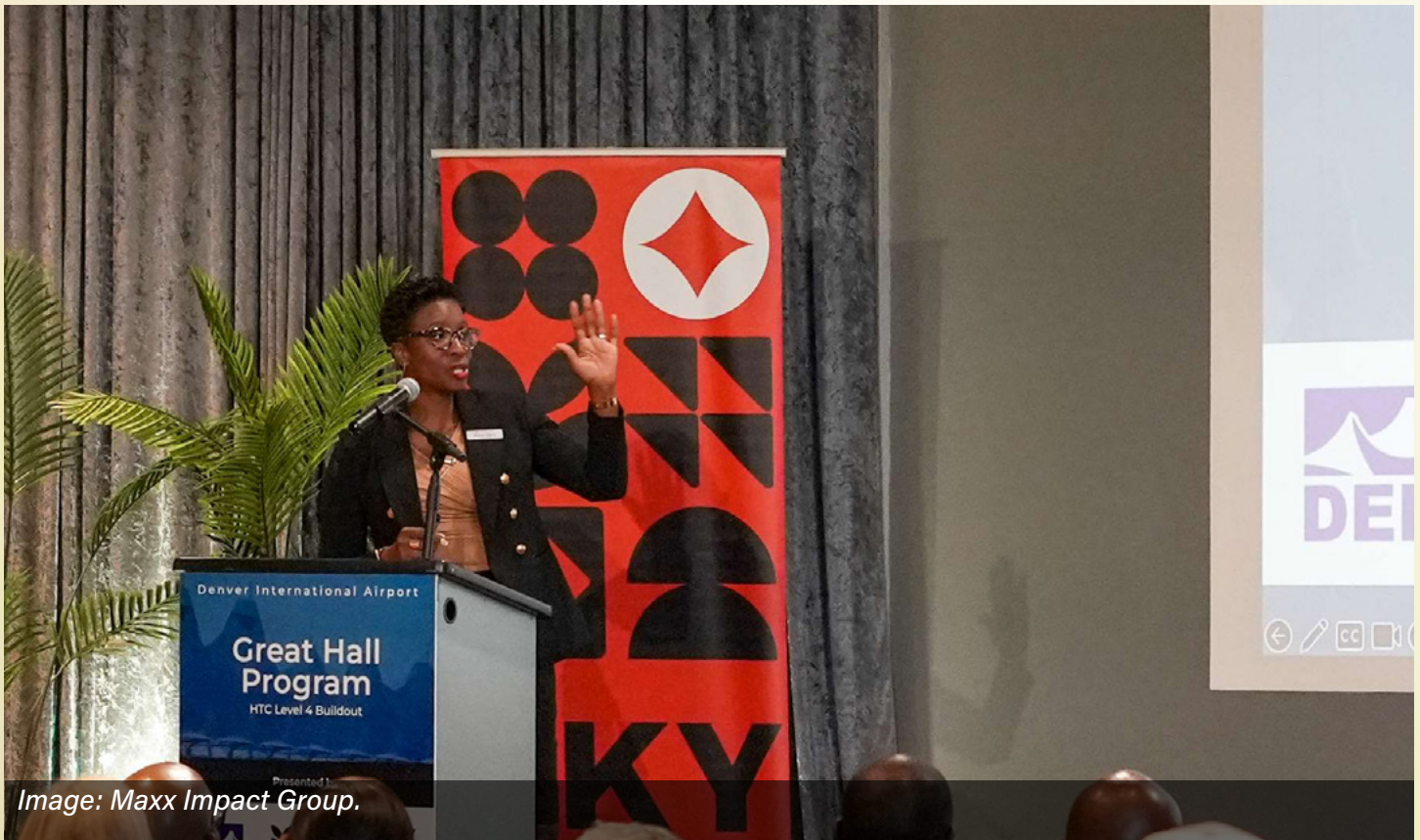


Image: Maxx Impact Group.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### Great Hall Project at Denver International Airport

In recent years, MIG has been involved in several high-profile projects of national prominence. One of their main projects is the Great Hall Completion Project at the Denver International Airport, in partnership with Hensel Phelps Construction Company. MIG has been part of this project since 2019 and has been responsible for developing, implementing, and overseeing both the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) Program and the Workforce Development Program.

Initially, the Great Hall project, which spans over seven years, was recognized as one of the Top 25 projects in the nation to watch by USA Today. During its early stages, WorkNOW, the region's leading workforce platform, described it as the "fastest-growing" project at that time, particularly in terms of collaboration and engagement with diverse local workers. As the program continues to progress, it has exceeded expectations and

garnered significant recognition, including accolades from Engineering News-Record (ENR), including being named the Mountain States Best Project and a Project of the Year Finalist in the Airport/Transit category in 2022, and the Award of Merit for Airport/Transit in Phase 2 in 2024.

Maxx Impact Group has taken the lead in fostering intentional collaboration with the owner/agencies, prime contractors, trade partners, certified and non-certified small businesses, and industry and community stakeholders to achieve significant outcomes:

#### Key Accomplishments

- Exceptional MWBE utilization
  - Achieved 30% utilization (exceeding our 18% goal)
  - Over \$176 million committed to MWBE firms
  - 109 MWBE companies contracted to date
- Strong workforce development
  - Apprenticeship hours currently at 8.5% (exceeding the 5% goal)
  - One of the 5 Denver Construction Careers Program (DCCP) pilot program projects

- Over 179,000 hours performed by apprentices
- Outreach events and activities,
  - Over 1000 events Hosted, attended, or supported
  - 30 Trade Partner Circles- small business workshops that provided peer mentoring, networking, and educational opportunities for small businesses to educate, inform, and enhance the capacity of various MWBE firms involved in the project and within the community.
  - More than nine prime contracting opportunities have been awarded to MWBE firms, allowing them to manage small packages with mentorship and oversight from the prime contractor.

### **Holder Construction (Columbus, OH)**

Selected as the consultant to assist in rewriting and clarifying the current MWBE ordinance

- Led supplier diversity initiatives that helped the client achieve a participation goal for a Big 5 Tech project for the first time in the prime's

25+ years in the region.

- SME Participate in legislative initiatives that resulted in unanimous votes for the Prompt Payment bill (Denver City Council), SB22-163, and the State Procurement Equity Program,
- Led an expanded team of diverse businesses on a major aviation janitorial project, including an innovative unbundled concept

### **THE FUTURE**

While the current climate towards DEI efforts is in flux, Maxx Impact Group has remained committed to equity. The company achieved a successful 2024 through the collective efforts of our team, clients, and community stakeholders, all of whom contributed to our success. Our success and achievements are measured by the positive impact we have on our projects and clients, as well as by helping our clients and partners create meaningful change. We also hold ourselves to the same high standards.



Image: Maxx Impact Group.



Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce's  
*40th Anniversary*  
Gala Awards

## **COMMUNITY CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS**

The Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce (CBCC) proudly marks four decades of excellence, leadership, and unwavering commitment to advancing Black businesses and professionals. In celebration of this milestone, we invite the community to submit nominations for distinguished awards that recognize individuals, corporations, and local organizations for their outstanding contributions to our community.

We encourage nominations for those who exemplify innovation, proven leadership, and dedicated service in the following categories:

**Award Categories** *(Please click the appropriate link for nomination form):*

- [Corporation of the Year Award](#) – Recognizing a corporation with a major presence/HQ in Colorado that has demonstrated exceptional commitment to diversity, inclusion, and community engagement support in the black community.
- [Les Townsend Community Service Award](#) – Honoring an individual whose legacy of exceptional service and dedication has profoundly impacted the Colorado black business community.
- [Non-profit of the Year Award](#) – Celebrating a Colorado based nonprofit organization that has made a significant impact on the black community through advocacy, service, engagement and empowerment.
- [Small Business of the Year Award](#) – Honoring a Colorado based small business that has demonstrated and exhibited outstanding growth, innovation, and proven leadership within the business community.

**Nomination Details:**

- ▶ Complete form with details in each section including nominator contact information. Form Submission Deadline: **June 20, 2025 at 11:59pm**
- ▶ [Nomination Guidelines](#): Please click on the award link to review guidelines
- ▶ [How to Submit](#): Email to [dr.angelic.cole@cbcc.biz](mailto:dr.angelic.cole@cbcc.biz)

We invite the community to participate in this esteemed tradition and help us recognize the changemakers and trailblazers who continue to uplift and empower those known and unknown to them. Join us as we honor excellence, celebrate leadership, and pave the way for the future.



# BLACK RETAILERS GROUP

CBCC SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP



***Meets every first  
Monday at 4:30 pm***

- Market Insights & Trends
- Collective Marketing Efforts
- Peer Support System
- and so much more!



For more info, contact Dr. Angelic Cole. [Dr.Angelic.Cole@cbcc.biz](mailto:Dr.Angelic.Cole@cbcc.biz)



Images: McBoat Photog

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a black dress with a vibrant floral pattern in shades of pink, red, and green, is shown from the waist up. Her right arm is raised, with her hand resting on a horizontal bar or ledge. She is looking slightly to her right with a gentle smile. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# **Reflecting on Leadership, Legacy, & Living Out Loud**

A Conversation with  
**Gloria Neal**

**By DR. ANGELIC COLE**

**Cole:** What would you say is the primary motivating factor behind your leadership?

**Neal:** The primary motivating factor behind my leadership is to serve, whether it's to improve upon a situation, a community issue, addressing an organizational issue, or a work related issue. I believe if you are going to be in a leadership role, then lead. If you are not conditioned to make the tough decisions required or are afraid of being unpopular when making tough decisions, don't step into the leadership arena. I also believe there are many ways to lead. It isn't always out front. Sometimes, you lead from behind, or equip others with the information they need to lead. Leaders don't always have to be in the front of the line to lead.

And those leadership decisions can also be fun decisions. I agreed to be a dancer (again) for CPRD DWDS 2025, "A Tribute to Girl Groups" Dancing in front of an entire city is not for the faint hearted! I can't wait to lead...I hope! Help me God!!

**Cole:** Who are your role models, and what life-changing lessons did you pick up from them?

**Neal:** Hands down, my momma! And while there are many others who have guided me along the way, there's no question that my mother was the key prism and role model by which I see the world. She had a 4th Grade Education, but a Ph.D in life. I am thankful to be the babygirl of Mary-Ann Dorsey Prioleau Dukes. It's not because she was perfect. No parent is. On the contrary, it's because she wasn't perfect that I admire her most. She would quote the Bible one minute and let you know things were not going to end well for you the next!

My mother did not sugar-coat how tough & cruel the world could and would be as a Black woman child. Instead, she used teachable moments to demonstrate her most important lessons. My mother and father both believed in discipline, but it was my mother who enforced it the most. When I was 12, I can remember a friend was caught stealing. I was with this friend when it



Photo: McBoat Photography

happened. My mother, like most parents, had always told me to never pick up anything in a store if I had no intention of buying it. She also told me that if I was ever caught with someone who was stealing, whether I knew about their plans or not, I would be treated as though I had been stealing myself. Why? She would say, "...You are judged by the company you keep...so if the company is no good...why are you with them? I raised you better!" "...You should feed 'em with a long handle spoon..." Throughout my life, I have fed many people with long-handle spoons for a variety of reasons with the understanding that none of them meant me no-good!

**Cole:** How do you ensure that others benefit from the life-changing knowledge you gained from your mentors?

**Neal:** I ensure others benefit by sharing many pearls of wisdom, life experiences and my time with mentees, as well as organizations that I happen to serve as board members, -- The Rose Aodom Center, Sickle Cell Initiative through the American Red Cross, Warren Village, honorary member (after serving 3 terms), and countless other organizations. I believe mentoring is another form of giving back.

**Cole:** What advice do you wish someone had given you earlier in your career?

**Neal:** Just about everyone answers this question by saying, "...don't sweat the small stuff." I wish someone would have asked, "Do you know the difference between the small stuff and the big stuff?..." Knowing the difference could have saved me a lot of time! When you are younger, everything seems to be "big" stuff. Upon reflection there are only a few things that really rise to being at the "big-stuff" level. I live and I continue to learn.



*Photo: McBoat Photography*

**Cole:** What inspired you to pursue a career in consulting, and how did you get started?

**Neal:** I did not directly aspire to become a Strategic Communications Consultant. Instead, I started out as a journalist who was inspired to have a career that afforded me flexibility, access, respect, freedom, financial independence and influence. Journalism (writing, public speaking, using my voice in a myriad of ways), was just the means by which the Universe helped me become accustomed to being an entrepreneur.

**Cole:** What do you believe to be the most important piece of advice for a leader to follow?

**Neal:** The most important piece of advice for a leader to follow is to be strategically courageous. For me that means saying the same things you said when someone is in the room as you said when they were out of the room. And that means you can't say just anything. That is a continuous lesson for all of us. As a leader, I believe you can be quiet and stand in your courage without uttering a word. I also believe leaders can move through board rooms and ballrooms with the same grace and confidence that they would display in bars and bowling alleys.

**Cole:** How do you prioritize work-life balance, and what advice do you have for junior professionals who are struggling to find balance?

**Neal:** There is no such thing as work-life balance! It's a nice myth to strive for but each individual in their respective profession has to find their balance. Sometimes that's 70-30 or 20-80. In this country we are all overworked and stressed, which is why it is even more important to shut-off all electronics during down time. One rule I strive to follow is to never bring my cell phone to the dining room table or breakfast island. The goal is to give my husband my undivided attention, especially during those times..



Photo: McBoat Photography

**Cole:** As an African American woman leader, what do you consider to be one of the most difficult obstacles you've faced?

**Neal:** As a Black Woman Leader I find it challenging fielding the same culturally insensitive questions about being Black. For example, "...what do you use on your skin to make it look that way?" or after trying to touch my hair they ask, "...what do you use on your hair?" My suggestion is that they google it. I've said on many occasions, "...at times I forget that I'm Black. But there's always someone who reminds me and they are never Black themselves..." It's tantamount to death by a thousand cuts on a daily basis.

**Cole:** What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the community today, and how do you see ways to overcome them?

**Neal:** That question requires a dissertation. There are many challenges facing the Black community today. We were not supposed to survive this long, let alone thrive. But man plans and God cracks-up! Incremental steps are taken in every generation and progress is made. However, there are still many difficult days ahead. Just as people have made progress in addressing wrongs facing Black people in America, there seem to be just as many people content on relying on old tropes and negative stereotypes. Berniece King quotes her



Photo: McBoat Photography

ball! That vision is ever changing just like the times we live. There are many facets which impact community responsibility. Plus, the term community responsibility is subjective.

What I can say is any future community in Denver will be heavily impacted by those residents who live in those respective communities. We will all have to adjust to many things--from technological advances, healthcare challenges, cost of living increases, housing older adults, providing eldercare, etc. World events are happening too quickly to say what the future of community responsibility will require or look like. It will take every single, able body, mentally stable adult who is willing to embrace challenges in the spirit of compromise in order to achieve lasting results.



Photo: McBoat Photography

mother, the late Coretta Scott King about struggle and progress. She says, "Struggle is a never ending process. Freedom is never really won, you earn it and win it in every generation." Not only is this true, it is offensive and painful to dance the racial-two-step every 25 years (depending upon who's in the White House, U.S Congress or the US Senate) to overcome ignorance and fear. Today's leaders bear the responsibility for allowing the erosion of many of these rights. Refusing to be an informed voter or civically engaged at any level of government never ends well for any country trying to be a democracy.

**Cole:** How clear is your vision for what the future of community responsibility should be in Denver?

**Neal:** Anyone who says they have a clear vision for what the future of community responsibility should look like in Denver must have a crystal

**Cole:** What do you see your legacy looking like?

**Neal:** That's for others to decide. But somewhere in my description of legacy I hope these things are included. She cracked us up! She pissed us off! She spoke truth to all who asked for truth! She stood all the way up! She made her mistakes! She loved her journey and her husband, Amani! And she was unapologetically Black!

**Cole:** Let's switch gears and end with you as a community leader by providing a positive and forward-looking statement about the Black Chamber's future for the next 40 years.

**Neal:** The Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce (CBCC) has many terrific years ahead of it. Sometimes, growth is painful and requires leadership to make tough choices. I'm sure the same is true at CBCC. I believe the Black Chamber here in Colorado has a bright future ahead of it as we enter into the 21st Century. The current leadership (CEO & Board Members) at the CBCC are up to the task of making those tough choices to ensure its viability for generations to come.



*Photo: McBoat Photography*



## JOIN THE CONVERSATION BUILD YOUR COMMUNITY

The Colorado Black Chamber is the voice of Black business owners and an advocate for resources and policies that impact Black business owners. Your success is our success.

### At the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce we:

- **Create** programs & services to support our Black-owned businesses
- **Connect** Black-owned businesses with each other
- **Collaborate** with corporate partners and other organizations to support Black-owned businesses

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A woman with long, wavy red hair, wearing a bright pink jacket, is seen from the back, looking towards a garden bed. The garden bed is filled with white mulch and several clumps of brown, dried-looking plants. The garden bed is bordered by a light-colored concrete or stone wall. The ground in the foreground is paved with light-colored square tiles.

# **Prescott Solutions: Thriving Through Purpose, Power, and Possibility**

**By PORTIA PRESCOTT**



**“Small businesses aren’t just a sector, they are the lifeblood of our communities, fueling innovation, providing second chances, and powering local growth.”**

— *Portia Prescott, Founder of Prescott Solutions*

## **A CEO the World Didn’t Expect—But Can’t Ignore**

When I first founded Prescott Solutions in 2009, I knew what I was stepping into—an industry that wasn’t built for someone who looked like me. A Black woman leading a staffing and workforce development firm in technology and cybersecurity was virtually unheard of. Many people, even within my own community, questioned me. Not because they didn’t believe in my intelligence or drive, but because they’d never seen someone like me do it before.

We’re taught that business ownership, especially in tech and staffing, is not our lane. That corporate success is something to chase from the margins, not to own outright. Being a CEO is reserved for a particular image. And that image has rarely reflected Black women.

So, I had to validate myself—to myself—before I ever set out to prove it to anyone else. That’s the silence we often don’t talk about. Black women carry a double burden: breaking barriers while healing the internal wounds of invisibility. We are building legacies with a weight on our shoulders that’s as cultural as it is personal.

Prescott Solutions was born not only out of strategy and skill—but out of necessity. I needed to show my daughter—and my community—that not only is there space for us in business, but we are the innovators shaping its future.

Small businesses are the backbone of America—and especially Colorado. But for many of us, starting a business isn’t just about the economy, it’s about building a life. For me, launching Prescott Solutions was never about just creating jobs or closing contracts—it was about creating

opportunity. Opportunity for others, for my community, and for myself.

After years of juggling the roles of artist, professional, mother, and community leader, I realized I needed a path that would allow me to show up fully for my daughter, for my people, and for my own growth. That path was entrepreneurship—and today, I’m proud to say that after a long road, Prescott Solutions is thriving. We are now a certified corporation and a growing force in staffing, resume-building, and workforce development—not just in Colorado, but across the country and even around the globe.



*Image: Prescott Solutions.*

## **Founding Story: Prescott Solutions and My Why**

I founded Prescott Solutions in 2009, during a time when few believed a Black woman could thrive—let alone disrupt—the staffing and workforce development industry. Back then, diversity was a checkbox, not a commitment. And for a woman like me, born and raised in Denver and a proud graduate of Kent Denver Country Day School, every door I walked through came with an asterisk.

To many white peers, I was “the exception.” I didn’t earn a spot—I was “let in.” My attendance at Brown University, an Ivy League institution, was questioned not on merit but on mistaken assumptions about affirmative action. Even when I graduated with honors, it wasn’t enough to silence the whispers: “She got lucky.” “They needed a Black girl.” “It’s DEI!”

Let me be clear: Nothing I’ve built has come from luck. I pulled myself up by my bootstraps the same way those white men love to say they did—except I did it with a whole system trying to keep me out.

I started this company with nothing but a vision, an old, borrowed laptop, and the unwavering belief that I could do more than survive—I could lead. I knew I wanted to create a company that would challenge how corporate America hires, trains, and thinks about talent. I didn’t want to just fill job slots. I wanted to build futures. I wanted to change the conversation from “Who’s qualified?” to “Who’s being seen?”

And believe me, I wasn’t seen—not at first.

Investors didn’t take me seriously. Partners ghosted. Clients questioned whether a Black woman could deliver results. I was told—more than once—that my image didn’t “align with the expectations” for executive search. But I kept going. I had to. I didn’t have a cushion to fall back on. There were no legacy dollars, no boardroom introductions passed down from my father’s network.

What I did have was tenacity, strategy, and a clear understanding of the value I brought. I studied the trends, I leaned into the tech sector before others even saw its potential, and I built this business from the ground up.

Prescott Solutions began as a one-woman operation—and today, we are a growing national firm that partners with clients to source, train, and place top-tier talent in AI, cybersecurity, and emerging industries. We specialize in people, especially the ones you’re overlooking.

Every early client win was a breakthrough. Every time I walked into a pitch meeting and walked out with a contract, I proved someone wrong. Every job we filled—especially for candidates who look like me—was a declaration: We belong here. We lead here.

Prescott Solutions exists because no one handed me the seat at the table. So, I built the damn table.

## **Legacy in Motion: My Daughter, My Mirror, My Motivation**

When my daughter graduated cum laude from American University this year, I sat in that auditorium flooded with emotions I didn’t quite have words for. There she was—confident, poised, unapologetically brilliant. A young Black woman at the top of her class, ready to enter the fields of business and finance not with hesitation, but with power. More importantly, she didn’t see business as a chokehold. She saw it as a path to power. Accepted into one of the nation’s top AI and business programs. No excuses. No explanations.

She was President of Women in Business at the University, and she knew she belonged there. That, for me, was the real victory—not just the degree, but the confidence to lead without apology. It reminded me that everything I’ve built is not just for me. It’s for the generation that comes next and doesn’t have to start with the same doubts we carried.

And at that graduation moment, I didn't just see her. I saw myself.

I saw the nights I worked late building this business so I could pay tuition and still make payroll. I saw the sacrifices I made so she could intern on Capitol Hill at the office of the Colorado U.S. Senator Michael Bennet, while I bootstrapped a company without investors. I saw how every time I told her, "You can be your own boss," she believed it—because she saw her mother living it.

You see, when I started Prescott Solutions, I wasn't just trying to create a business. I was building a legacy. Something my daughter could point to and say, "That's ours. That's my mother's vision. That's what Black excellence looks like."

And here's what I tell her—and every young woman of color coming up behind me: You do not have to shrink to succeed. You don't have to choose between your creativity and your career. You don't have to chase validation from systems that weren't built with you in mind.

Business does not have to mean burning yourself out for someone else's dream. It can mean launching your own.

That's the future I'm building through Prescott Solutions. A future where our children don't just apply for jobs—they create them. A future where being Black and brilliant is not an anomaly—it's the standard.

So, when I watched her walk across that stage, I realized something profound: she is not the exception. She is the beginning.

The beginning of a generation that doesn't have to constantly explain how they got there. A generation that doesn't apologize for their power. A generation that builds businesses without permission.

She is my mirror. She is my motivation. And her future—and the future of every young Black leader—is why I do what I do.



Image: Prescott Solutions.

## Our Mission at Prescott Solutions

At Prescott Solutions, our mission is simple: connect top-tier talent with meaningful career opportunities. We are a boutique staffing and workforce development firm that's proud to help our clients build winning teams—and help individuals land roles that truly reflect their skills, aspirations, and potential.

Whether you're a job seeker looking for your next big break or an organization in need of diverse, qualified candidates—Prescott Solutions is here to help.

We've staffed positions at places like Xcel Energy, Vail Resorts, Panorama Consulting Solutions, Diversant, Accenture and Robert Half. Our approach is personal, strategic, and inclusive. We offer resume building, interview prep, job training, workforce development consulting, and more.



Image: Prescott Solutions.

## Thriving Through the Challenges

Like many small businesses, we've faced our share of challenges. But being a Black woman business owner brings a unique and complex set of hurdles.

- **Access to capital** remains one of the biggest barriers. Funding doesn't flow as freely to women and minority-owned businesses.
- **Equal respect as a CEO** is still a fight. Despite being competent, visionary, and capable, I've often had to prove myself in rooms where I didn't automatically "belong."
- **Self-doubt and imposter syndrome** can be persistent. Early on, I often asked myself: Can I really make it as a business owner? But I kept going. I pushed through. I found my niche.

Now, I don't just survive—I thrive.

I've built a business that not only sustains me and my family but creates career paths for others—especially brilliant people who have been overlooked, underestimated, or left behind.

## Why Diversity Matters in Hiring

Let's be clear: Diversity is not a compromise. It's a competitive advantage.

At Prescott Solutions, we don't just talk about equity—we embody it. We hire qualified, diverse talent because we know excellence comes in every color, gender, and background. It's ludicrous to think that a "diversity hire" means a candidate is underqualified. We are proud to say that we've placed candidates from entry-level to VP roles across industries, cities, and countries.

We don't just fill seats. We match people with purpose. That's our superpower.



Image: Prescott Solutions.

## Work-Life Balance and Why I Chose This Path

One of the most personal reasons I launched Prescott Solutions was my daughter. As a competitive figure skater with the Broadmoor Skating Club in Colorado Springs, she needed my presence—not just financially, but emotionally. I wanted to be there for her practices, performances, and milestones. I didn't want to sacrifice motherhood for the marketplace.

Becoming a business owner gave me control over my time, my energy, and my legacy. And like many women during and after the 2008 recession and COVID-era economic shifts, entrepreneurship became the key to flexibility and freedom.

## Representation, Mentorship, and Confidence

Women—especially Black women—don't always see ourselves at the top of the corporate ladder. That lack of representation can chip away at our confidence. But I'm here to say: we belong in every room we walk into.

At Prescott Solutions, we don't just talk staffing—we build leaders. I coach women on everything from commanding the room to interview etiquette to how to dress for the role they want. I've mentored hundreds. I lead workshops through my other company, Jefferson Prescott Consulting with my partner, Mary Jefferson, and the Rocky Mountain NAACP where I serve as a Regional President—bringing economic development, green job opportunities, second-chance job fairs, and workforce strategy to life.

## The Power of Small Business and Community

We have been proud members of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, the Women's Chamber of Commerce, and currently, the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce, which has truly supported us and recognized our impact. These organizations have not only welcomed us but recognized our value—and that of countless other Black and woman-owned firms like ours—who are changing the face of business in this state. These communities remind us that Black-owned businesses are booming—but we still face a disparity gap.

That's why we advocate—not just for ourselves but for all small businesses. We urge policymakers, investors, and community members to see us, support us, and include us in funding conversations, banking solutions, vendor contracts, and hiring strategies.

At Prescott Solutions, we are more than a business—we are part of a thriving, interdependent ecosystem of small businesses, community leaders, and grassroots movements that keep Colorado running. Small businesses are not just a sector—they are a lifeline. They are where innovation starts, where people get second chances, where the economy grows from the ground up. Yet, despite our critical role, small businesses—especially those owned by women and people of color—remain underfunded, underrepresented, and too often ignored.

Here in Colorado, Black-owned businesses are booming, but we still face a massive disparity gap:

- According to the SBA, Black-owned businesses receive a fraction of the venture capital and small business loans that white-owned firms do.
- State and municipal contracts rarely reflect the true diversity of the business community.
- Minority- and women-owned business certifications don't always lead to actual opportunities—just a LOT more paperwork.

That's why advocacy matters. I don't just run a business—I fight for the future of small business in Colorado.

I've testified at the State Capitol. I've led and spoken at economic forums. I've participated in chamber-led initiatives to promote procurement equity, and I've worked with non-profits to lift up underrepresented entrepreneurs. Because if we don't show up to the decision-making table, we will continue to be left off the guest list.

We urge policymakers, investors, and corporate leaders to:

- **See us:** Value our expertise, professionalism, and impact.
- **Support us:** Through capital access, mentorship, and connections.
- **Include us:** In contracts, grants, and opportunities—not just as tokens but as trusted, capable partners.

## Why Small Businesses Matter—and Why I'm Proud to Lead One

I never went to college imagining I would become a business owner. My academic path—rooted in international studies, politics, and law—was about advocacy, not enterprise. Back then, the image

of a CEO was shaped by magazines, television, and textbooks. The archetype was clear: white, male, wealthy, and powerful. I remember being spiritually moved when I read, "Why Should White Guys Have All the Fun," by Reginald Lewis. But somehow, I was left still perplexed because his journey still was from the perspective of male corporate dominance.

I didn't see myself in that image—until I saw Suzanne de Passe profiled in Black Enterprise. A Black woman, a powerhouse, and a CEO—she shattered the mold and rewrote the story. I was obsessed. I knew I had to work for her, and I eventually did. I was one of her three assistants. It wasn't glamorous—I took notes, ran errands, and sat in the shadows—but I was determined to learn what it meant to lead from the top.

That was before social media, before LinkedIn, before we had hashtags like #BlackExcellence and #BlackWomenLead. My inspiration came from pages—Ebony, Jet, Black Enterprise—not screens. Those magazines were my internet, my LinkedIn, and my TED Talk rolled into one. I wasn't looking for makeup tips or celebrity



Image: Prescott Solutions.

gossip—I was flipping pages hoping to find someone who looked like me and had built something of their own.

Yes, I was encouraged to submit photos to become a Jet Beauty of the Week. But what I really wanted was to be a CEO of the Month. I wanted to be profiled not for how I looked, but for what I led. I clung to that 1981 Black Enterprise cover featuring one of the first Black women in business leadership. It gave me permission to dream—and the blueprint to try.

### **A Legacy of Entrepreneurship, A Future of Empowerment**

Entrepreneurship runs deep in my blood. My late father, Wilbur Williams, was a city accountant in Northglenn. But he wanted more autonomy—and more impact. So, he left his government job to start WW Tax & Accounting Services, a firm he ran for over five decades, serving generations of Colorado families and faith-based organizations with integrity and grit.

My grandfather, Jesse Johnson, was a pioneer. He founded Town & Country Realty, one of the first Black-owned real estate companies in Denver—a time when redlining, segregation, and economic exclusion were not only common but widely sanctioned. He opened doors for Black families to buy homes, build equity, and dream.

My mother, Shelley Hodge, still runs Town & Country today. She has been a mentor to dozens of realtors and helped hundreds of families navigate the most important financial decision of their lives.

This legacy shaped me—but I knew I wanted to build something different.

While my family worked in accounting and real estate, I wanted to build a workforce engine. I wanted to place people in careers, coach them into promotions, and empower them with confidence. I wanted to create a business that gave people not just a paycheck—but a path forward.



*Image: Prescott Solutions.*

That's what The Prescott Group, LLC now known as Prescott Solutions exemplifies.

## Why Staffing? Why Now?

Staffing, for me, is not just a business—it's a mission. At Prescott Solutions, we understand that employment is about more than a paycheck. It's about dignity, stability, and the transformative power of purpose. That belief drives everything we do.

We've built Prescott Solutions on the principle that workforce development is a vehicle for equity. From job training and interview coaching to strategic staffing and career placement, we equip individuals—especially those from underrepresented communities—with the tools they need to thrive in today's workforce. For us, it's not enough to help someone find a job. We're committed to helping people launch careers, build legacies, and reclaim their futures.

That includes second-chance individuals reentering society after incarceration, those recovering from addiction, and people who've simply been overlooked for too long. We meet them where they are—and elevate them to where they deserve to be.

Since founding Prescott Solutions in 2009, I've grown this company from a boutique consultancy into a full-service staffing and workforce development firm with national reach. What began as a vision for more inclusive hiring has evolved into a proven model for economic empowerment. We now place high-performing talent in competitive sectors like IT, finance, cybersecurity, and administrative operations. But our greatest success isn't just in job placements—it's in the stories of people who were once counted out, now thriving in roles they never thought possible.

Our candidates are as dynamic and diverse as the world they're stepping into. And our clients don't just gain employees—they gain contributors who bring resilience, lived experience, and leadership potential to their teams.

I started Prescott Solutions to disrupt the traditional staffing model. Today, we're not only bridging opportunity gaps—we're reshaping how companies think about talent, equity, and long-term success. Staffing isn't just the business we're in—it's the future we're building.

## The Future of Recruiting Needs

At Prescott Solutions, we partner with a broad spectrum of clients—from grassroots nonprofits to emerging and established small-to-midsize businesses—who rely on us not just to fill positions, but to help shape the future of their workforce. We believe recruitment is not a transaction—it's a transformation.

One of the most overlooked predictors of hiring success is the candidate's understanding of their role in the historical and cultural fabric of the organization. We teach our job seekers that every role, regardless of title or function, carries a responsibility: to shape and contribute to team culture. That influence begins not on day one of employment, but in the interview room—where behavior, communication, and intention must align with the values of the larger organization.

The job market is evolving at an unprecedented pace. As technology disrupts entire industries, we're seeing a decisive shift from experience-based hiring to skills-based recruitment. According to McKinsey's Five Fifty report, nearly 90% of companies are either experiencing or anticipating significant skills gaps. This is not just a challenge, it's a call to action.

Prescott Solutions is answering that call by preparing communities for the jobs of the future. Our workforce development strategy emphasizes readiness for tech-driven roles, but we go further. We recognize that the next era of employment will be defined by reskilling and adaptability. The companies that will thrive in this economy are those that understand the value of transferable skills—communication, leadership, emotional intelligence, and the ability to adapt in dynamic environments.

We are not simply filling job orders. We are building pipelines of talent who are prepared to lead, grow, and evolve with the demands of the future. At Prescott Solutions, we are creating a new model—one where equity, strategy, and innovation are at the core of recruiting success.

## **Why Technology and Cybersecurity? Because the Future Demands It**

When I launched Prescott Solutions, I was already ahead of the curve by focusing on staffing in the technology sector. But today, as the world rapidly shifts toward digital transformation and cybersecurity becomes central to national and economic security, we've evolved again.

Cybersecurity isn't just a hot sector—it's a critical one. Black communities need to be involved in protecting systems, institutions, and information. But more than that—we need to lead those efforts.

It's time to shift our mindsets: to stop seeing tech as "for them" and start seeing it as an urgent calling for us. I say this at every panel I speak on: We can't be locked out of the most innovative sectors of the economy because of a lack of exposure, preparation, or belief.

We at Prescott Solutions are here to change that. We're not just placing candidates into roles. We are placing purpose into action.

## **Preparing Our Youth: The Talent Pipeline Starts in High School**

We cannot wait until college or career fairs to introduce our youth to opportunities in tech. We need to start in high school—or earlier. Our kids should be getting certifications in software, cybersecurity, and data analytics now. We need to normalize coding the same way we once normalized trade school.

The future doesn't wait—and neither can we.

McKinsey has already reported that up to 30% of critical roles in many companies aren't filled by the most appropriate people. That means there is space—but we need to prepare talent who are ready for it.

That's where adaptability and learning agility come in. Employers aren't just hiring resumes. They're hiring resilience. And we as a people? We have resilience in our DNA.

At Prescott, we train candidates not just for skills, but for mindset. How to navigate transitions. How to tell their story. How to pivot when the market shifts. That's how you future-proof your career—and your community.

## **LinkedIn Is Not Optional—It's Essential**

One of the first things we teach our candidates is how to build a professional brand online. And that starts with LinkedIn. I tell people all the time: If you're not on LinkedIn, you're invisible to the people who matter.

Why?

Because 875 million people are on the platform. Because it's one of the most powerful tools for professional visibility. Because if someone Googles your name, your LinkedIn profile will likely show up before anything else.

But most importantly—it's where decision-makers are looking.

LinkedIn isn't just for job seekers; it's for thought leaders. It's for Black professionals building credibility, sharing knowledge, and connecting to opportunities we were once locked out of. In our community, we must leverage every tool that closes the exposure gap. LinkedIn isn't just a platform—it's a bridge.



Image: Prescott Solutions.

**“Small businesses aren’t just a sector, they are the lifeblood of our communities, fueling innovation, providing second chances, and powering local growth.”**

**— Portia Prescott, Founder of Prescott Solutions**

## Resume Rules Are Changing—And You Must Too

There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all resume. I teach candidates how to tailor every application. Your resume should speak directly to the job, the employer, and the values of the company. You must be intentional.

With AI now filtering applicants before a human ever sees your resume, the game has changed. We coach our clients on how to get past those filters—and how to stand out once they do.

Recruiters will start using AI to analyze tone, consistency, and even your engagement online. That's why your LinkedIn, your digital footprint, and your training need to be aligned.

The candidate of the future is already here. We're just making sure they're ready to show up.

## Workforce Trends: What We Need to Know and Prepare For

According to the World Economic Forum, the jobs of tomorrow are:

- Software Developers
- Security Management Specialists
- Data Scientists
- UI/UX Designers
- Internet of Things Experts
- Renewable Energy Technicians
- Healthcare and Biotech Professionals

Yet our communities are underrepresented in all of them. Why?

Because we aren't always part of the conversation—or the pipeline. That stops now.

Prescott Solutions is helping bridge that gap. Not just by staffing companies—but by influencing the workforce development narrative. We help employers see beyond degrees and into potential.



## AI Is Reshaping Everything—Here's What That Means for Us

We're already seeing the impact of AI and automation. According to Bloomberg, major banks are preparing to cut 200,000 jobs. Not in 20 years—but in 3 to 5.

But here's the nuance: Not all jobs are disappearing—many are just evolving.

We must move our community from job stability to career adaptability.

AI can be a threat—or a tool. It depends on how prepared we are. That's why we don't just source talent at Prescott—we upskill it. We don't just fill roles—we shape leaders who can evolve with the times.

## Why Colorado Must Invest in Small Businesses—Especially Now

We are in a defining moment in Colorado. Our economy is growing. Small businesses are the backbone of this state. We innovate. We employ. We uplift. It's taken time—and a lot of hard-earned lessons—to develop the right strategy for success. But I've never been more proud of where we're headed.

Prescott Solutions is more than a company—it's a movement. A vehicle for economic justice. A hub for untapped potential. A future-focused, equity-driven firm where people are at the heart of everything we do.

If you're a business in need of great talent—or someone seeking a second chance—we're here to help. Our cities are expanding. But if small businesses are not centered in that growth, we risk building prosperity for the 1% category, while leaving the rest behind.

Small businesses:

- Employ nearly half of Colorado's workforce
- Are the first to hire from the community
- Are the most flexible in second-chance hiring

and skills training

- Are the most diverse segment of the business ecosystem

Yet we are the last to receive state contracts, the last to receive pandemic relief, and the last to be represented in business policy forums.

If you care about equity, you must care about small business.

If you care about the economy, you must support small businesses.

If you care about Colorado's future, you must invest in small businesses.

## Prescott Solutions: A Black Woman-Led Business of the Future

For too long, being a Black woman in business meant being underestimated—or overlooked entirely. I've built Prescott Solutions to rewrite that narrative.

We are not a boutique agency. We are a national force. We help clients:

- Reduce administrative burdens through strategic talent solutions
- Increase retention by matching people not just by skills, but values
- Leverage AI and data to make hiring decisions that are inclusive and forward-thinking

Our clients stay with us because we understand people. We understand culture. And we understand what innovation really looks like.

Because we've lived on the margins of it—and we're here to lead it now.

As women, as Black professionals, as entrepreneurs—we are not the exception. We are the example.



Image: Prescott Solutions.

## **Final Thoughts: The Future Belongs to the Builders**

The future of work is already here. But that future doesn't have to exclude us.

Prescott Solutions is more than a staffing agency. We are a Black-owned, woman-led innovation engine that's reshaping the narrative of what leadership, excellence, and strategy look like.

To my community: You don't have to keep asking for permission to be powerful. You already are. You just need the infrastructure—and someone who believes in building it with you.

To corporate America: If you're not hiring from companies like mine, you're missing out on the

very talent, perspective, and brilliance that will carry your business into the next era.

Let's stop checking boxes—and start building legacies.

The future doesn't belong to the Fortune 500—it belongs to the bold, the brave, the builders.

Small businesses like mine are the seedbeds of transformation. We're growing not just companies, but careers. Not just contracts, but confidence. Not just profits, but purpose.

And we need your support—now more than ever.

## Solutions for Success

To other women and Black entrepreneurs out there, here's my advice:

- Get certified—Prescott Solutions is certified at the local, state, and federal levels.
- Know your worth—Demonstrate confidence in your expertise.
- Invest in relationships—This is a business of people. Your network is your net worth.
- Stay consistent—Even when it's hard. Especially when it's hard.

We are locally grown and locally staffed, but our reach is global. We've helped candidates move across states and continents to find the right role. We've helped companies build stronger, more inclusive teams. And we're just getting started.

## The Call to Action: We Are Not the Exception—We Are the Blueprint

Prescott Solutions is more than a staffing firm. We are a declaration that talent lives in every zip code, on every block, and in every underestimated individual who's ever been told they weren't enough.

Our journey—from a one-woman dream to a national force in workforce development—isn't just about jobs. It's about justice. It's about economic power. It's about transforming the way companies think about talent, leadership, and legacy. And yes—it's personal.

Because when the world doubted me, I built a business.

When they whispered about affirmative action, I graduated with honors from Brown.

When they said Black women don't run companies like this, I proved them wrong—again and again.

And now, as I watch my daughter take her place in boardrooms and markets that once excluded us both, I know the mission is bigger than ever.

We're not here to ask for a seat. We're here to reshape the table, bring our own chairs, and pass the blueprint down to the next generation.

If you believe in a future where brilliance is not bound by bias—partner with us.

If you're ready to hire better, lead bolder, and build systems rooted in equity and innovation—Prescott Solutions is your ally.

If you are a woman, a person of color, or someone who's ever been told to dim their light—this is your reminder: you don't need permission to lead. You were born to.

We are no longer waiting for the world to see us.

We are building the future—and you're invited to be part of it.

## Closing: From Vision to Victory

Prescott Solutions started as a dream—and now it's a thriving enterprise. We still face challenges. We still fight for visibility, funding, and equity. But every resume we revise, every candidate we coach, and every job we fill is a victory—for us and for the communities we serve.

If you're a job seeker, we want to help you build your best career—from resume to role. If you're a company, let us staff your next position with a diverse, talented candidate who will exceed expectations.

Visit us at [www.prescottsolutions.com](http://www.prescottsolutions.com). Let's create the economy we deserve. Let's redefine what leadership looks like. Let's build a legacy—together.

Let's Connect!

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# The Black Community Health Assessment: Examining Social Determinants of Health, Health Disparities and Health Equity Outcomes in Denver, CO.

by Principal Investigator: GENENE L. DURAN, PhD, MHA, CPH

### History

A Community Health Assessment (CHA) is a systematic process used to understand the health of a community by identifying, collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information about its health status, resources, and needs. It provides a comprehensive picture of the community's current health status, factors contributing to health issues, and available resources to improve health. The data collected from the CHA is crucial for developing a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) which outlines strategies to address identified health priorities. Typically the assessments occur every five years and are done by public health specialists within our local public health departments as well as within our hospital systems.

For 18 months from 2024-2025, staff members at the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment gathered data in order to develop the Community Health Assessment (CHA). During that time, three DDPHE Board Members of color provided feedback that we would like to see the Department engage with more communities of color throughout the process. We provided the department staff members with contacts at multiple community based organizations that predominantly serve Black and Brown populations

and which we believed it was imperative the Department engage. Those organizations were not contacted to take part in the assessment. We know this to be true because we three board members of color all serve as Executive Directors of the suggested organizations, but also have close personal connections to those we do not lead. In April 2025 when the results of the CHA were presented to the board, my theory was that if the communities of color had been appropriately engaged as requested, the health priorities which were identified would have been much different.

### [Denver Department of Public Health and Environment 2025 Community Health Assessment Results](#)

Data for the CHA was collected via surveys and listening sessions. Out of 715,000 residents in the City and County of Denver, approximately 2,150 surveys were received which makes up a total of 0.31% of the population and 100 residents participated in 12 focus groups.

### Importance

After 17 years of serving my community as a health and human services expert, my hypothesis is that within the space of public health we cannot

FACILITATOR: GENENE DURAN, PHD, MHA, CPH



# STATE OF BLACK HEALTH IN DENVER, CO

Join us as we launch the Black Community Health Assessment (BCHA) with a panel discussion, community feedback session, free health screenings and health information from community partners. *Lunch provided by Black Tie Catering.*

**7/26/25 11AM-3PM**

**Center for African  
American Health  
3350 Hudson St.  
Denver, CO. 80207**

## **PANELISTS INCLUDE:**

Deidre Johnson | Charles S. Gilford III |  
Dr. Terri L. Richardson | Alisha Brown, MNM |  
Sere S. Myers Jr., D.D.S | Medicine Mama Kia |  
Tanya Greathouse, Ph.D., LCSW

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<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/state-of-black-health-in-denver-co-tickets-1434863016909?aff=oddtcreator>



Need additional information? Contact:  
[areyourducksinarow15@gmail.com](mailto:areyourducksinarow15@gmail.com)

simply conduct a community health assessment because the needs of our specialized, vulnerable and underserved communities are vastly different from one another and completely different from the community at large. We must take the time, resources and energy to assess the health of individual communities at a micro level and use that information to meet each community where they are. Those results could then be used to inform an overall community health assessment at the macro level. By administering a CHA in this manner, we can better address health disparities, the social determinants of health (SDOH) and positively influence health equity outcomes.

Social determinants of health are the non-medical factors influencing health outcomes, including socioeconomic status, education, neighborhood environments, and access to healthcare. For the Black community, structural racism and systemic inequities have contributed to significant health disparities. Research shows that Black Americans face higher rates of chronic illnesses, including hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, often linked to social determinants such as limited access to healthy foods, quality healthcare, and safe housing. The healthcare system itself reflects these disparities. Studies indicate that Black patients are more likely to receive substandard care, experience implicit bias from providers, and have less access to preventive services. In Denver, Colorado, the Black community faces distinct challenges, including gentrification, housing instability, and healthcare access barriers. Recent reports highlight that Black residents in Denver have higher rates of emergency room visits and poorer health outcomes compared to white counterparts, underscoring systemic gaps in healthcare infrastructure and outreach. Public

health interventions targeting SDOH have shown some success, but gaps remain, particularly in data specific to the Black community in Denver. More localized research is needed to assess the effectiveness of community-based health initiatives and to address racial disparities in healthcare delivery and outcomes.

### **Solution**

To address the aforementioned gap in knowledge regarding the health of our Black community members, I have developed the Black Community Health Assessment (BCHA). The research study aims to examine the SDOH, health disparities and health equity outcomes experienced by the Black community in Denver, Colorado. Once it has been completed, the BCHA will then inform the development of the Black community health improvement plan (BCHIP). As a result, health interventions and treatments can be more effective, better targeted and our community based organizations can implement programs and services which will align with the needs we have identified. In addition, the study will then be used as a template to inform community health assessments for other medically underserved communities.

### **Methodology**

The Black Community Health Assessment was developed based upon the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP 2.0) framework. This public health program planning model is considered best practice within the field of public health and is used to develop Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans. The MAPP 2.0 framework uses a community-driven strategic planning



process to achieve health equity. MAPP provides a structure for communities to assess our most pressing population health issues and align resources across sectors for strategic action. It emphasizes the vital role of broad stakeholders and community engagement, the need for policy, systems, and environmental change, and alignment of community resources toward shared goals.

Throughout the BCHA process, anonymous surveys will be collected from Black residents over the age of 18 years old who reside within the City and County of Denver. In addition, multiple listening sessions will be held so that we may hear the stories and healthcare experiences of Black Denver community members. The data gathered from both the surveys and listening sessions will be used to develop a report which will inform the services,

programs and interventions truly needed within our community, and will then be used to inform our Black Community Health Improvement Plan.

### Project Support

Since the idea for this project was presented in April 2025, multiple community partners have rallied to show support. Partners such as Metropolitan State University College of Health and Human Sciences Department of Social Work, Denver Health Community Integrated Health Care team, Denver Health BEING ERG (Black Excellence In Navigating Growth Employee Resource Group), Be Well, Denver Health EYE for Prevention team, the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce and a multitude of community based organizations and community volunteers have informed the process.

## **Call to Action: How can you get involved?**

The Black Community Health Assessment Survey is available on the Ducks in a Row Human Services Inc. website ([BCHA survey](#)), through multiple community partners including Denver Health, Inner City Health, The Center for African American Health and Be Well. Additional opportunities to engage with the Black Community Health Assessment are as follows:

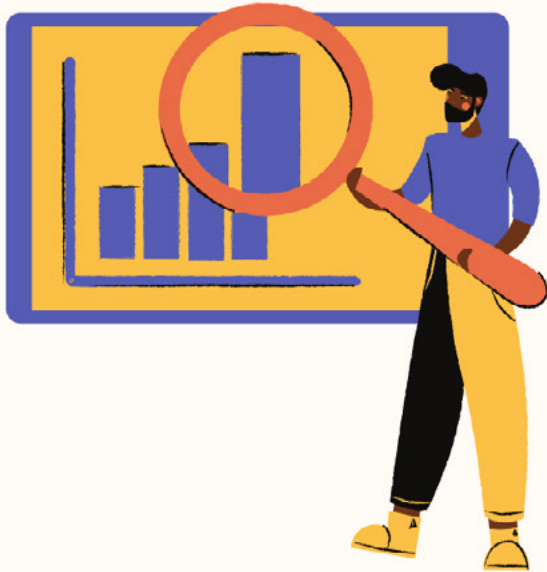
Date	Time	Location	Event
Saturday, July 26, 2025	11am - 3pm	The Centers for African American Health 3350 Hudson St. Denver, CO 80207	The State of Black Health in Denver, CO <b>*BCHA Listening Session &amp; Survey</b>
Saturday, August 9, 2025	12pm - 2pm	Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library 2401 Welton St. Denver, CO 80205	<b>BCHA Listening Session &amp; Survey</b>
Saturday, September 13, 2025	12pm - 2pm	Green Spaces 2590 Walnut St. Denver, CO 80205	<b>BCHA Listening Session &amp; Survey</b>
Sunday, September 21, 2025	3pm - 6pm	Majestic View Farm 7000 Garrison St. Arvada, CO 80004	Frontline Farming The Black BBQ <b>*BCHA Survey</b>
Saturday, October 11, 2025	12pm - 2pm	Green Valley Ranch Library 4865 Andes Ct. Denver, CO 80249	<b>BCHA Listening Session &amp; Survey</b>

It is important that you get involved because we have got to start using data specifically about our community to tell our policy makers, healthcare providers, healthcare payers, nonprofit/community based organization, etc. what we need from them in order to improve our health and health outcomes, instead of allowing them to develop and implement solutions to issues that we have not identified as the community being served.

Any questions regarding the Black Community Health Assessment can be directed to Principal Investigator, Genene Duran, PhD, MHA, CPH at [areyourducksinarow15@gmail.com](mailto:areyourducksinarow15@gmail.com) or the contact us page at <https://diarhs.org/>.

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## **6 Questions for your Doctor: Are Memory Issues a Concern?**

By JIM HERLIHY

If you or a loved one have concerns about memory loss or other unexplained changes in behavior, getting an expert opinion from your family doctor is an important first step in understanding how to proceed.

Medicare offers a free annual wellness visit for those 65 and older where patients can request a brain health assessment. But if you don't see your family physician frequently, he or she may not know you well enough to determine if you are experiencing cognitive changes.



To help, the Alzheimer's Association has developed a list of six questions that individuals or family members can ask the doctor to help ensure that the visit is productive and patients get proper direction.

- 1. Do I (or the patient) have any medical conditions that could increase my risk for developing Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia?**
- 2. Am I taking any medications that could be causing memory or cognitive-related symptoms?**
- 3. What tests could you perform that might rule out Alzheimer's or dementia as a diagnosis?**
- 4. Are you aware of my family history - particularly among immediate family (grandparents, parents or siblings) related to Alzheimer's or dementia?**
- 5. Should I be concerned about ... (explain any changes in memory, focus, thinking or mood)?**
- 6. Can you provide a referral to a geriatrician or neurologist?**



“This is a good starting point for having a productive conversation with your family doctor,” said Jim Herlihy, spokesperson for the Alzheimer’s Association of Colorado. “I would suggest bringing these questions in writing along with any other specific concerns or examples you may have. There can be a number of reasons behind memory loss and personality change, so it’s important to get guidance from your doctor as early as possible.”

For individuals who have immediate questions, the Alzheimer’s Association has a free, 24/7

Helpline staffed by trained professionals who can provide guidance and support: 800-272-3900.

Information also is available on the Association’s website: [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org). A free online webinar explaining the 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s is [available here](#).

Contact: Jim Herlihy, Senior Marketing & Communications Director  
(970) 590-5885 or [jherlihy@alz.org](mailto:jherlihy@alz.org)

# Black Business ON THE MOVE

## Green ICE: Powering Events and Empowering Sustainability in Denver

By LASHEITA SAYER

LaSheita Sayer, founder of Green ICE, a DBA of ZoZo Group, is electrifying Denver's event scene and bolstering its EV infrastructure. Driven by a passion for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, this Black-owned business offers eco-friendly power solutions for events and expert repair services for electric vehicle charging stations.

Sayer's journey began with a keen awareness of the environmental impact of traditional power sources at large gatherings. "I saw firsthand the reliance on noisy, fume-emitting generators," Sayer explains. "There had to be a cleaner, quieter way." This led to the creation of Green ICE, offering portable battery rentals to vendors at festivals, markets, and outdoor events.

Instead of gasoline or diesel, vendors can now tap into rechargeable battery packs, providing silent and emission-free energy for everything from food stalls to lighting. This means significantly less noise, improved air quality, and a tangible step towards more sustainable event practices. "The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive," says Sayer. "Vendors appreciate the quiet operation and the elimination of fuel costs and fumes. Event organizers are also drawn to the sustainability aspect."

Recognizing the crucial need for reliable EV charging, Green ICE has expanded its services to include the repair and maintenance of EV charging stations. This move strategically positions the company at the forefront of the green energy transition within the transportation sector. "Ensuring these stations are functioning correctly is vital for EV owners and for

encouraging further adoption," Sayer explains. "Our team is trained to diagnose and repair a range of charging station problems, minimizing downtime and maximizing accessibility."

By offering both portable power solutions for events and essential EV infrastructure maintenance, Green ICE demonstrates a comprehensive commitment to sustainability. LaSheita Sayer's vision extends beyond business; it's about actively contributing to a greener future for Denver.

As a Black-owned business, Green ICE also represents the growing diversity and innovation within the green technology sector. Sayer hopes her journey will inspire other entrepreneurs from underrepresented communities to pursue their passions and contribute to building a more sustainable and equitable world. "It's important to see people from all backgrounds involved in this movement," Sayer emphasizes. "Climate change affects everyone, and diverse perspectives and skills are crucial for developing effective solutions."

Looking ahead, Green ICE plans to expand its battery rental fleet and broaden its EV charging station repair services across the Denver metro area. With a strong commitment to environmental responsibility and a dedication to providing reliable and efficient services, LaSheita Sayer and Green ICE are undoubtedly a driving force in Denver's transition towards a cleaner and more sustainable future, proving that Black businesses are indeed on the move, leading the charge towards a greener tomorrow.



# Editorial and Deadline Calendar

## Featured Topic                      Space Reservations                      Materials Due

<b>February 2025</b>		
Black History Month	Tuesday, January 14	Friday, January 17
<b>March 2025</b>		
National Women's History Month	Tuesday, February 12	Friday, February 14
<b>April 2025</b>		
Black Women's Month	Tuesday, March 18	Friday, March 21
<b>May 2025</b>		
National Small Business Month	Tuesday, April 15	Friday, April 18
<b>June 2025</b>		
Juneteenth	Tuesday, May 13	Friday, May 16
<b>July 2025</b>		
International Day of Cooperatives	Tuesday, June 17	Friday, June 20
<b>August 2025</b>		
National Black Business Month	Tuesday, July 15	Friday, July 18
<b>September 2025</b>		
911 Memorial	Tuesday, August 12	Friday, August 15
<b>October 2025</b>		
Health	Tuesday, September 16	Friday, September 19
<b>November 2025</b>		
Youth Entrepreneurs	Tuesday, October 14	Friday, October 17
<b>December 2025</b>		
National Write a Business Plan Month	Tuesday, November 11	Friday, November 14
<b>January 2026</b>		
A Salute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	Tuesday December 9	Friday, December 12

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<b>Quarter Page</b>	\$250.00	\$225.00	\$200.00	\$175.00	\$150.00
<b>Eighth Page</b>	\$125.00	\$112.50	\$100.00	\$87.50	\$75.00
<b>Sixteenth Page</b>	\$62.50	\$56.25	\$50.00	\$43.75	\$37.50

## Advertisement Sizes

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<b>Half Page - Horizontal</b>	7.500 w x 4.875 h	7.750 w x 5.125 h
<b>Half Page - Vertical</b>	3.625 w x 10.000 h	3.875 w x 10.250 h
<b>Quarter Page - Horizontal</b>	4.875 w x 3.625 h	5.125 w x 3.875 h
<b>Quarter Page - Vertical</b>	3.625 w x 4.875 h	3.875 w x 5.125 h
<b>Eighth Page (business card) - Horizontal</b>	3.500 w x 2.000 h	3.750 w x 2.250 h
<b>Eighth Page (business card) - Vertical</b>	2.000 w x 3.500 h	2.250 w x 3.750 h
<b>Sixteenth Page</b>	1.750 w x 2.375 h	2.000 w x 2.625 h

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Our membership offers unparalleled networking opportunities, exclusive access to business resources, and strong advocacy for your business interests. Elevate your business with our educational workshops and events that keep you at the forefront of industry trends. Connect, grow, and succeed with a community that champions your success. Take the first step towards unlocking your business's full potential.

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