

THE ACUMEN

March 2024

CARING FOR THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY

A Conversation With
Mile High United Way's
Vanecia Kerr

BY DR. ANGELIC COLE

**A BRIDGE TO BETTER
HEALTH**
BY CHARLENE TAM

**EMPOWERING
COLORADO YOUTH**
BY ELYCIA COOK

**ENGINEERING
EXCELLENCE**
BY DEMEKE ASHEBO



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Seeking Submissions

for Article Features



Would you like to share your story with a broader audience? Submit a 2,000-5,000 word article about your business or industry to be included in a future issue of The Acumen, a CBCC monthly e-magazine publication.

**Need more details?
Contact Us!**

TheAcumen@cbcc.biz

President's Corner

Celebrating Women's History and the Impact of Women Entrepreneurs

Dear Reader:

Every year since 1987, the month of March has been designated by Congress as Women's History Month. The President issues an annual proclamation on Women's History Month, highlighting the progress the Administration has made on behalf of women and girls, and federal agencies announce new programs, initiatives and funding opportunities for women owned businesses.

The last four years have been exceptionally difficult for everyone, though especially for women. As a result of the pandemic, rising costs and supply chain disruptions, a record number of women left the workforce to care for children and loved ones, to establish a stronger work-life balance or because they felt underappreciated in their roles. While many women left jobs during the pandemic, data suggests that some of them did so to start their own businesses, with 80% of women who started businesses did so from scratch, as opposed to buying another business or franchise. More than half also launched their ventures solo, which is double the rate of men who did the same. A bright spot has been that many new businesses started by women are started by Black women, who have been the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs in America even before the start of the pandemic.

Despite the difficult challenges that women continue to navigate, they are returning to work and starting businesses. There are more resources to support the growth of women owned businesses now than ever before. In March 2023, the President announced ongoing and additional resources for women owned businesses, including an expansion of the Women's Business Center (WBC) network. This expansion has brought the total number of WBCs to 160 across the country to assist women entrepreneurs through mentorship, technical assistance, business development



and financing opportunities. The SBA's network of additional resource partners, including SCORE and the Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) offer a strong portfolio of resources that women entrepreneurs can access to help grow their businesses, including the SCORE resource hub for women entrepreneurs.

As women continue to start more businesses, it is crucial that they have access to the resources and tools they need to be successful. The increased investments in resources that help them start their businesses and in policy issues that acutely impact women, such as paid leave and increasing access to affordable healthcare options, will be strong determinants to their success.

More power to Women,

Dr. Angelic Cole

President & CEO
Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce

"My mission in life is not merely to survive but to thrive and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style."
Maya Angelou (1928-2014), memoirist, poet, civil rights activist.

Bulletin Board

We invite you to learn more about the dynamic CBCC board members.



Founder, President, CEO
RTL Networks, Inc.

Founder, Board Chair
RTL Foundation

Meet Richard Lewis Board Member

I moved to Denver in the spring of 1999. I had just separated from the US Air Force after a decade of service as a Communications Officer, where I served in various global locations, but I had no experience in corporate America. I was a new parent to a 10 month old son, and in a new city where I did not know a soul and I desperately needed a job.

I share this personal journey because I firmly believe it's not unique. Our communities are teeming with talented, hardworking individuals yearning for opportunities to advance professionally and support their families. However, the reality is: African Americans face disproportionate challenges in corporate America, encountering barriers to employment and advancement, hindering their economic progress. Studies consistently reveal disparities in hiring and promotion rates for African Americans. And if that were not enough, numerous assessments prove that contracting opportunities for African American-owned businesses also lag behind.

A 2018 Disparity in Contracting study for the City and County of Denver Revealed that disparities clearly still exist in the use of minority and women owned firms in city procurement practices, and affirmed the need to utilize contracting practices that are race and gender conscious. Similar findings were made in a 2023 study analyzing disparities in State procurement practices. This is where organizations like the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce (CBCC) step in. For nearly two decades, I've been privileged to support the CBCC's mission of empowering the African American community in these spheres.

My own corporate stint was brief, and despite abundant success and recognition, my time in corporate America was marked by layoffs that ultimately led me to entrepreneurship. RTL Networks, Inc. emerged from adversity, born after back-to-back lay-offs within a two-year span. Having recently been awarded full custody of my now 3 year old son, and was juggling a new home I had just purchased before being laid off, and single parenthood. This was motivation to pour every ounce of determination into building RTL Networks, Inc. Today, RTL Networks stands as a multi-million-dollar enterprise, renowned for the quality of our services, high client satisfaction and our steadfast commitment to the community. Our accolades speak volumes:

- Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year (Mountain Desert Region) [2019]
- Ranked on Inc Magazine's "Inc. 500" List of Fastest Growing Private Companies in the Us [2010]
- Multiple appearances on Inc Magazine's "Inc. 5000" List of Fastest Growing Private Companies in the US
- Black Enterprise Magazine: "Top 100" List of Largest Black-Owned Firms in USA [2014]
- 9 News Business Leader of the Year [2011]

- Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce's David E. Bailey Small Business Advocate Award [2011]
- Minority Businessperson of the Year, by the SBA (Colorado Region) [2008]
- Minority Business Champion of the Year, by the SBA (Colorado Region) [2008]
- MLK Jr. Business Social Responsibility Award [2011]
- Cisco Systems Small Business Partner of the Year (Public Sector) [2011]
- Department of Defense/Pikes Peak Region: Small Business of the Year [2006]

My company and I are honored to have received so many local and national accolades recognizing both business excellence and deep commitment to community engagement. However, the accomplishments themselves are not what is truly important. What is important is that we can use this success and these accolades as a "springboard" to be involved in the community, elevate others, and forge opportunities that enable other businesses and future generations to flourish. My military service instilled in me a powerful ethos of "service before self," a guiding principle that continues to shape my actions and decisions. As an entrepreneur, I've been fortunate enough to contribute to the fabric of our community in meaningful ways, serving on numerous boards and establishing organizations dedicated to empowering those on the margins of society. Organizations where I serve (and have served) include:

- *BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce
- *BOARD OF TRUSTEES*
Denver Mile High United Way
- *BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
Denver School of the Arts
- *BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
Rocky Mountain PBS

- *BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
AYA Foundation
- *BOARD OF ADVISORS*
CO Association of Black Professionals in Engineering and Science (CABPES)
- *BOARD OF ADVISORS*
Colorado FutureTek
- *PRESIDENT'S COMMUNITY CABINET*
Metropolitan State University
- *FORMER COLORADO COMMISSIONER & CHAIR*
Colorado Civil Rights Commission
- *FORMER COLORADO COMMISSIONER*
Business Experiential Learning (BEL) Commission
- *FORMER BOARD OF DIRECTORS and BOARD CHAIR*
Denver Branch of the Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank
- *FORMER BOARD OF DIRECTORS and BOARD CHAIR*
Colorado Youth at Risk
- *FORMER BOARD CHAIR*
Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce
- *FORMER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
Black Resiliency in Colorado (BRIC)
- *FORMER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
Colorado Forum
- *FORMER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
Denver Metro Sports Commission
- *FORMER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS*
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce
- *FORMER EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER*
Denver Council of The Boy Scouts of America

Through board service, we are able to learn a lot about how successful non-profits operate and why unsuccessful non-profits struggle, while providing my own operational insights



and in many cases, a much needed minority perspective to support the building of a more equitable society—one where opportunities abound, regardless of race or background. My journey is a testament to the transformative power of entrepreneurship and community support, and it's a journey I'm honored to share and continue alongside the CBCC and countless others striving for a brighter, more inclusive future.

This vision of a more inclusive future is what inspired me in 2006 to create the Urban Leadership Foundation - ULF CONNECT Leadership program (formerly known as Chamber Connect), an intense 10 month leadership training experience designed to help participants become more effective, well rounded, and influential leaders in the areas of business, politics and community leadership. As an entrepreneur, I habitually identify and develop solutions for unfulfilled needs in the community, and the need for a program like this was immense. While there were numerous developmental programs in other communities, the African American community had no programs to identify, harvest and nurture up and coming

professionals in this manner. Therefore, I designed a program to address this need using some conventional strategies, but also adding some unique features to "speak to" some of the specific challenges in the African American community. I also inserted sufficient fundraising opportunities to ensure financial viability. Joined by former State Senator Angela Williams, who at the time was a fellow CBCC board member, we "pitched" the program to the CBCC for support and permission to operate as a CBCC program. Angela and I dedicated the first two years to teaching the program, sharing our insights and experiences. We also utilized our extensive networks to establish strategic partnerships with key organizations, including the Denver Downtown Partnership, Daniels Fund, and the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, further enriching the program's offerings and impact.

Like many startups, the Chamber Connect program initially faced funding challenges. However, thanks to my entrepreneurial success, I was able to fund the program until it became self-sufficient. Eventually, the CBCC transitioned the Chamber

Connect program into its independent foundation now known as the [Urban Leadership Foundation](#), where it thrives today, continually transforming the lives of exceptional individuals, who either possess proven leadership skills or show immense potential, are being shaped into the leaders of tomorrow. In addition, the program has given its future leadership a stage and opportunity to showcase their talents and commitment to the community and as a result, the program is now performing at a level impossible to envision during the formation phase.

This is why it is so important that we have business success in our communities... so we can use this knowledge, success and these accolades as a "springboard" to be involved in the community, elevate others, and forge opportunities that enable other businesses and future generations to flourish.

More recently, this ever-present desire for a brighter, more inclusive future for all, was the inspiration in establishing the [RTL Foundation](#). The mission of the RTL Foundation is to provide and support educational opportunities in the areas of entrepreneurship, history, and technology. The entrepreneurship portion of this mission is facilitated via the foundation's first-of-its-kind, BIPOC Non-Profit Development Center (BNDC), which provides a collaborative space and programming to support minority-led and servicing nonprofit organizations. The history portion of this mission is currently facilitated by the [African American Timeline](#), which is also first-of-its-kind.

The BIPOC Non-Profit Development Center (BNDC) is a groundbreaking endeavor, as we have not seen examples of what we are doing anywhere else in the country. This unique collaborative space and its enriching programs are dedicated to bolstering minority-led and -focused

nonprofit organizations, fostering a nurturing ecosystem where these vital entities can thrive.

Located in the historic Five Points neighborhood of Denver, Colorado, the BNDC stands as a beacon of innovation and support. At 2900 Welton Street, it not only offers crucial office space but also serves as a dynamic hub for minority lead and serving non-profit organizations.

By connecting these groups not just physically but also through shared goals and visions, the BNDC cultivates a vibrant community presence. At the center is a cradle of empowerment, offering seminars, speaker events, and training led by local and regional experts. These sessions, available at minimal or no cost, are meticulously designed to hone leadership skills and organizational prowess, ensuring every participating group has the tools to succeed and contribute meaningfully to the community.

In a landscape where for-profit incubators and coworking spaces abound for multiple sectors, the BNDC breaks new ground by providing deeply discounted office space specifically tailored for minority-led nonprofits. This pioneering approach has welcomed our inaugural cohort of 23 organizations, composed of on-site and virtual memberships. Over two years, these organizations will benefit from the RTL Foundation procured programming,



Image: African American Timeline.

designed to elevate them into more efficient, more impactful and more sustainable entities, poised to have greater impact in the community. The BNDC is not just a place; it's a movement towards creating a more inclusive, empowered, and connected nonprofit sector, ready to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

In an exciting parallel initiative, the RTL Foundation unveils the African American Timeline, a groundbreaking project that offers a comprehensive look into the African American experience in North America. Beginning in 1501, with the arrival of the first enslaved Africans, and extending to the current day, this timeline encompasses nearly 200 pivotal moments that celebrate the resilience, culture, and indomitable spirit of African Americans—a narrative too often marginalized in conventional historical accounts.

This exceptional timeline, available at www.AfricanAmericanTimeline.org, transcends the conventional to become a living homage to the contributions and enduring legacy of African Americans. It serves not only as an educational tool but also as a bridge connecting past and present, encouraging a deeper understanding and appreciation of this rich heritage. All proceeds from the timeline sales further the RTL Foundation's mission, amplifying its impact.

Designed to complement any setting, the timeline is offered in a variety of formats including posters, canvas prints, acrylic, brushed metal, and more, ensuring that it can be a striking addition to both indoor and outdoor spaces. The current edition concludes in 2024, but in keeping with our commitment to ongoing education and remembrance, it will be updated annually every February in honor of Black History Month, capturing new milestones and stories of significance.

This initiative represents more than just a timeline; it is a vibrant, living document that honors the past, informs the present, and inspires future generations.

As we look to the future, the RTL Foundation remains steadfast in its mission to uplift and empower through education and collaboration. By providing a home for minority-led nonprofits at the BNDC and enriching the public's understanding of African American history through the African American Timeline, we are laying the groundwork for a more inclusive, informed, and interconnected community.

We're thrilled to keep building on our partnerships with the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce, alongside other allies and passionate individuals committed to fostering growth across all communities. I hope the sharing of my journey has offered you some insight or inspiration as you navigate your path to personal achievement and making a difference in the community. Wishing you nothing but the best on your journey!

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A Leader's Responsibility to the Community

**A Conversation with Mile
High United Way's Vanecia
Kerr**

By DR. ANGELIC COLE

LIVE UNITED





Photo: McBoat Photography

Join CBCC's Dr. Angelic Cole in an exclusive conversation with Vanecia Kerr, Chief Impact Officer at Mile High United Way, exploring the innovative strategies and personal philosophies driving the industry forward.

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

Kerr: The primary motivating factor behind my leadership is making a positive difference in my community. It's always been important to me that my work has meaning and purpose.

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

Kerr: My role models have always been my parents. My mother was constantly looking for ways to help other people. She believed in dedicating her time to organizations guided by a purpose and mission. Often times this was through our church and how we could utilize the resources available to serve others. She was a leader in our church and ultimately after she

passed they named the missionary society after her because of her commitment and dedication to the community. She was also engaged in breast cancer awareness throughout the county. My father was less involved in organizations but it was the way he supported young people and encouraged their success that stood out to me. I'm definitely a "joiner" as my husband says. I'm the one who serves on multiple boards of directors and engages with several organizations.



Photo: McBoat Photography

I know I got that from my mother. However, there are other times when I will quietly support others with no fanfare or announcements needed. I just want to do the right thing and I believe I got that from both my parents. They are definitely my role models.

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

Kerr: I believe that it is important to share what I learned with others, pay it forward, and make myself available to mentor emerging leaders. Sometimes it's coffee meetings, lunch and other times it's a phone call. If someone I know wants to chat, I'm happy to do so. We just need to find the time that works for both of our schedules.

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

Kerr: I wish someone gave me a little more confidence early in my career. Many would probably not know this based on my interactions today. I'm way more confident and I speak up often when I have something to add to a conversation. When I started my career, I was not very confident. As a first-generation college graduate, I found myself in professional spaces that my parents had not experienced. It was very intimidating at first. It took time for me to believe that my voice should be heard and that my ideas had value.

Cole: What inspired you to pursue a career in the nonprofit field & how did you get started?

Kerr: That's an interesting story. When I was in high school and college, my plan was to run for Congress. I always knew I wanted to be in a role where I could give back. When I graduated from college, I didn't get into the law school I wanted to attend so I decided to pivot and pursue my Masters in Public Administration with an emphasis in non-profit management. I worked full time at a Fortune 100 company while going to graduate school at night. At that point, I still thought I would run for office once I found the city where I wanted to live. Although I was in Long Island, New York (which is where I grew up), I knew that this was not the place where I wanted to live in adulthood.



When the company decided to open an office in Denver, I was asked if I could relocate so I made the move to Denver. I was working in an account management role and began to grow my career where I started taking on more leadership responsibility. (Side note: I ended up meeting my husband, Kevin, three months after I moved to Denver.) Ultimately, I ended up pursuing a role in Community Affairs and this completely changed my career. As I learned more about the non-profit organizations in the Denver community, I realized that I wanted to do more to address the needs in our community. I made the decision in 2011 that it was time to leave the corporate sector and spend the last half of my career working at non-profit organizations that were truly making a profound impact.

My husband and I had a family friend who was working at City Year. He was in a C-Level role and as we were talking about the work he did I asked why City Year was not in Denver. This conversation led to an opportunity for me to set up a meeting with the Superintendent of DPS and City Year. I ended up being on the Founding Committee to bring City Year to Denver and when the office was opened, I was offered a position. This was my transition into the non-profit sector and it's been the most rewarding experience. Just in case you're wondering if I still have

aspirations of running for office, the simple answer is no. I realized that I could make a difference in my community at the grassroots level through great non-profit organizations. I don't need to leave my family in Colorado to enter Congress and spend most of my time in Washington, DC. I love spending time with my husband and 22-year-old son, Kristoff. I have the best of both worlds!

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

Kerr: I believe it's incredibly important to do what you said you would do and never forget that you are there to serve. In my role, I'm there to support my team and ensure they have the tools and resources to get the job done. Part of my job is to create the strategy, determine how it will be executed and then give my team what they need to be successful. We measure our success throughout the year because measurable impact is important to me. We should continuously be moving in a direction that allows us to level up and get better each year. This work is too important to me. We are impacting people's lives and implementing programs for the people in our community to be their best selves. Mediocre work is not acceptable. I always aim to be the best at what I do, and I want my team to be their best as well.

Cole: How can you inspire others while also maintaining that you continue to be inspired by Mile High United Way's overall mission?

Kerr: Mile High United Way's mission is to unite people, ideas, and resources to advance the common good. I consider myself fortunate to work at an organization that is so closely aligned with my own values. Our focus is to support the community and provide programs that help advance them by creating sustainability and economic mobility.

In my role, I oversee our six direct service programs, our public policy and advocacy, our evaluation and learning, and our grants to other non-profit organizations. It's a big job but it is so very rewarding. I have an incredibly talented team that exudes positivity, compassion and innovation in spite of the challenges we see each day. I'm inspired when I interact with them and

our Executive Team. We have the most amazing CEO, Christine Benero, who leads with her heart and believes strongly in our people and our community. It's simply inspiring to be a part of this amazing team at Mile High United Way.

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

Kerr: I'm constantly telling my team that they need to take care of themselves. Our work is hard. It takes a lot of time and compassion fatigue is real. It is important that we find time for ourselves. This may mean something different for every person but we all need to create the right space for self-care.

For me, I find time on the weekends to simply relax. Sometimes that may be watching a movie, reading a good book or hiking with my husband and son. Other times I may plan to take a day off during the week and spend time by myself. This may include a relaxing massage and lunch alone. It helps me clear my head to have a day off during the week when my days are usually filled with back-to-back meetings. Alone time for me can be very relaxing and it allows me to recharge.

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

Kerr: I have faced many obstacles throughout my career. You have to remember that I've been working for a long time. First, I will say that I started my career in the 90's doing corporate sales which was a very male dominated field. I don't have enough time here to explain or share the things I experienced as a woman or specifically as a Black woman in this field. However, I will share that I was definitely passed over for a promotion when I clearly had outperformed my peers on multiple levels.

When I moved to another company, I thought that an environment that was a little more diverse in terms of gender and culture would be better. In some ways it was and in other ways, things were way more difficult. Women I thought were going to be supportive were not always supportive, but I also had some incredibly smart leaders who



Photo: McBoat Photography

“I believe it’s incredibly important to do what you said you would do and never forget that you are there to serve.”

mentored me and showed me how to navigate the corporate world. I also learned that as a leader, my role is to support my team and ensure they have everything they need to be successful. Sometimes it has been tough but it has also been rewarding. I would say that I've had more rewarding times than tough times. Some of the people who were supportive didn't look like me and then there were others who did. I have seen a lot and experienced a lot, but I try to learn from each experience.

Cole: What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the nonprofit world today, and how do you see Mile High United Way overcoming them?

Kerr: This will come as no surprise but we just don't have enough resources to address all the needs we see on a daily basis. Mile High United Way is a large non-profit organization in Denver. We impacted over 180,000+ lives and there is still more work to do.

We believe it takes a collaborative effort with measurable impact to broaden our scope in the community. This is why we have thousands of partners who work with us and serve as resources for our 211 Help Center. We have six direct service programs that align with our community priorities of Giving All Children a Strong Start, Supporting Education & Academic Success and Creating Economic Opportunity for All. We serve the community directly and measure our progress along the way to ensure we are delivering the type of impact that changes peoples lives for the better.

We must continue to increase our resources and we are thankful for those in our community who support our work through donations of time and money. We can overcome the challenges in our community if we continue to work together.

Cole: How clear is your vision for what the future of community responsibility should look like at Mile High United Way?

Kerr: At Mile High United Way, we believe that we all have a responsibility for our community. My vision is clear. It is a collective effort that is linked through collaborative effective results. No one organization or person can address everything happening in our community. I believe we must work together. Our organization has historically and will continue to bring people together to address our community's most pressing needs. This includes working with legislators, other nonprofit organizations, elected officials, businesses and, of course, the community we serve to learn what they want and need. It takes all of us and I believe we can do this together.

Cole: In what direction does Mile High United Way see itself going?

Kerr: Mile High United Way continues to be an innovative non-profit organization that addresses needs as we see gaps in our community. A good example is our new Early Childhood Education (ECE) Center that will open in Spring 2024. This center will be only the second employer sponsored childcare in Downtown Denver. We realized after the pandemic that we could do more to serve our community through the space in our building. As a result, we remodeled our first floor to make room for the new ECE Center that will accommodate almost 60 children (infants to 5 year olds). This will be a center for the community and most of the slots are designed for those who need quality affordable childcare. Construction is almost complete and our partner, Mile High Early Learning, will open the center in just a few weeks.

This is the type of innovation we are demonstrating in our community and we hope other employers will consider how they use their space to potentially serve their employees and our community. Our vision is to continue looking for opportunities to do things differently while making a meaningful impact on those we serve.



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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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Practical nursing students.
(Photo: Emily Griffith)

Emily Griffith Technical College Provides Training in Crucial Industries

By ANNA SMITH

[Emily Griffith Technical College](#) (Emily Griffith), located in Denver, is the public, postsecondary and adult education arm of Denver Public Schools. The mission of Emily Griffith is to prepare students for today's workforce and tomorrow's opportunities. The College serves over 8,300 students annually through career and technical education (CTE) certificate programs which offer both apprenticeship and onsite work-based learning opportunities, high school equivalency and continuing education courses.

Brief History

In 1916, Emily Griffith founded the Opportunity School. More than 1,400 students registered the first week. The school was open 13 hours a day, five days a week and subjects included

telegraphy, industrial millinery, typing, academic subjects and English language classes. Emily Griffith served as the principal of the school for 17 years and retired in 1933 having served more than 100,000 students. In 1934, the school was renamed Emily Griffith Opportunity School to honor her for bringing vocational education to Denver and revolutionizing education throughout Colorado. In 2011, the school was renamed Emily Griffith Technical College to better represent the current mission of the school. Emily Griffith was ahead of her time because she envisioned the school before technical colleges were even a concept. By providing students equal access to education and real-world opportunities, we continue to strive to remove barriers in the education system.

What Makes Us Unique

- We are a public college offering 19 career and technical education training certificate programs.
- We offer one of the lowest tuition rates in

Colorado and 100% of our students graduate with no student loan debt.

- Most students earn their certificate in less than a year.
- We have some of the state's highest completion and job placement rates for post-secondary education.
- We offer day and evening programs.
- Students can transfer up to 45 credit hours to a Colorado community college.
- Students and apprentices can transfer seamlessly into CSU Global or MSU Denver.
- We are the only post-secondary institution in Denver Public Schools (DPS) serving adults.
- We are a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with more than 39% of the student body identifying as Hispanic and 9% are Black.

We have three locations in Downtown Denver, easily accessible by public transportation.

Emily Griffith Technical College Today

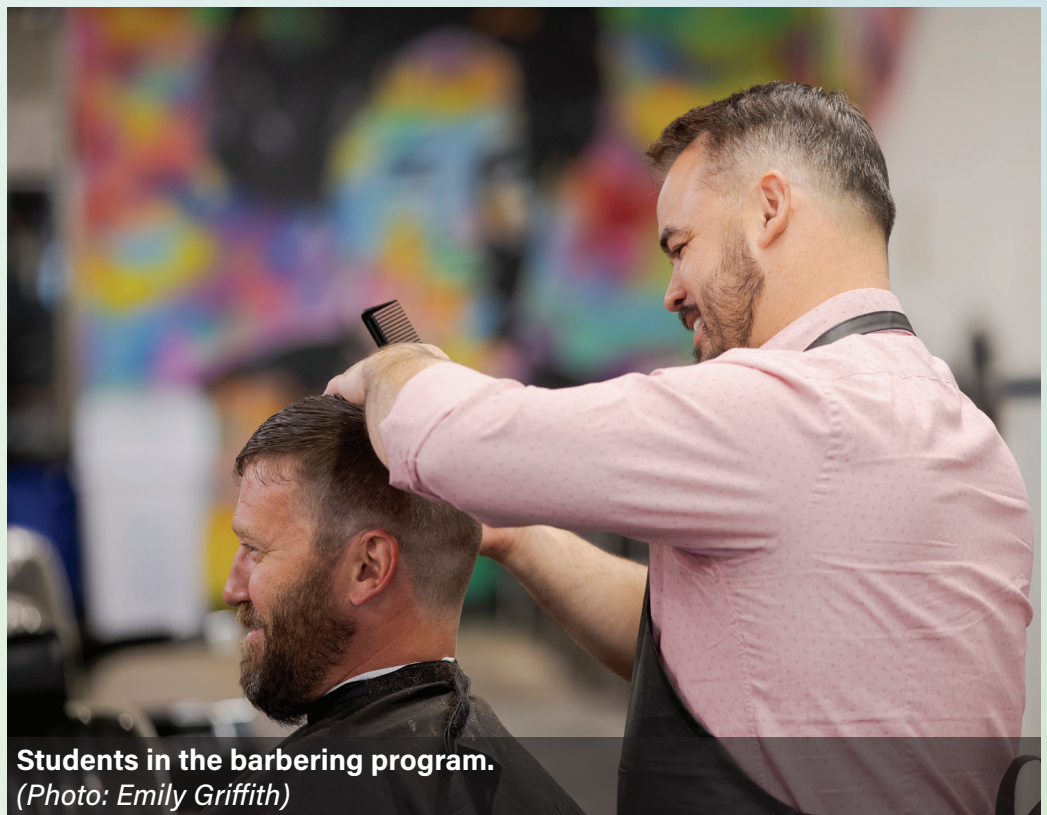
Currently, Emily Griffith offers 19 CTE certificate programs:

- Accounting
- Automotive Collision Repair
- Automotive Service
- Barbering
- CAD-BIM
- Computer Networking
- Construction Pre-Apprenticeship (high school students only)
- Cosmetology
- Culinary Arts
- Dental Assisting
- Esthetician
- HVAC
- Massage Therapy
- Medical Assisting
- Multimedia And Video Production
- Nurse Assisting
- Practical Nursing
- Water Quality Management
- Welding

Apprenticeship Training Division

Registered Apprenticeship Programs are industry-driven, high-quality career pathways where employers educate and train their future workforce. Apprentices obtain work experience through paid on-the-job training supervised by industry professionals, receive mentoring and classroom instruction, and earn a nationally recognized, portable credential. Upon successful completion of their training, Apprentices enter into high-wage career pathways and earn college credits transferable to any Colorado community college, Metropolitan State University of Denver or CSU Global.

Emily Griffith Technical College is the largest apprenticeship provider in Colorado. The College collaborates with local chapters of national organizations throughout the state to provide 12 Registered Apprenticeship Programs through 16 partners including bricklayer, carpenter, certified line cook, electrician (inside and residential), HVAC, ironworker, pipefitter, plumber, sheet metal, steel fabrication and voice data and video technician. Most registered apprenticeship programs take between two to five years to complete.



Students in the barbering program.
(Photo: Emily Griffith)

In 2023, Emily Griffith Technical College was recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor as an Apprenticeship Ambassador for serving as a champion in promoting, expanding, and diversifying Registered Apprenticeship.

English Language Acquisition Classes

Emily Griffith has been teaching adults 17 years and older English for more than 100 years. Each year more than 1,800 students from 50 different countries, speaking 66 different languages, come to Emily Griffith to learn English.

High School Equivalency (HSE) Exam Preparation

Emily Griffith also offers classes to prepare students for the HSE (formerly known as the GED) exams. Adult students master Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies skills required to obtain their high school equivalency.

Continuing Education

Learners can gain a new skill, pursue a passion or explore a new topic in our continuing education classes. Choose from Barbering Crossover, Basic Life Support, Clock Repair, Dermaplane or DIY for the Homeowner.

Student-Run Businesses Open to the Public

Students gain real work experience at our student-run businesses including Emily's Salon & Barbershop, Emily's Café, Emily's Massage Clinic and Emily's Spa. These are all open to the public and offer affordable goods and services.

Emily's Café

Emily's Café is run by students in Emily Griffith's Culinary Arts program under the supervision of the Culinary Arts instructor. It is open to the public for breakfast, lunch and dinner at



Massage therapy students.
(Photo: Emily Griffith)



Students in the automotive service program.
(Photo: Emily Griffith)

select times throughout the week. Culinary Arts students hone their cooking and customer service skills through real-world experiences serving the public. Breakfast staples include pancakes, French toast, made-to-order omelets and more. Lunch and dinner options include sandwiches, pizza, salad bar, soups and daily specials. All dishes are affordable and delicious. Emily's Café is open Monday through Wednesday for breakfast from 8:30-9:30 a.m., lunch from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and for dinner on Tuesday nights only from 6:30-8 p.m. The Café is closed when school is not in session. The Café is located at the Emily Griffith Campus in downtown Denver at 1860 Lincoln St.

Emily's Massage Clinic

Run by our massage therapy students under the supervision of licensed instructors, Emily's Massage Clinic offers customers opportunities to relax, reduce pain, tension, stress and anxiety. Services include chair massage, therapeutic

massage, hot stone massage, cupping massage and prenatal massage. Prices vary between \$5-\$55 for 60 to 90 minutes. A 15-minute chair massage is just \$5! Hours at Emily's Massage Clinic vary by semester; appointments are required. To schedule an appointment, call 720-423-4816 or email massage@emilygriffith.edu. The clinic is located at the Emily Griffith Campus in downtown Denver at 1860 Lincoln St.

Emily's Salon and Barbershop

Emily Griffith cosmetology and barbering students operate Emily's Salon and Barbershop under the supervision of licensed instructors. A variety of services are offered at affordable prices, including cuts, color, shaves and nail services. Day and evening services are available. Cuts start at \$5. To book an appointment or for more information, please call 720-423-4798. Emily's Salon and Barbershop is located at the Emily Griffith Campus in downtown Denver at 1860 Lincoln St.

Emily's Spa

Our esthetician students provide spa services under the supervision of licensed instructors. Emily's Spa offers high-quality skin care services at low prices including facials, microdermabrasion, waxing, makeup application, lash and brow treatments, spray tans and more. Appointments are required; walk-ins are not accepted. Day and evening services are available. Emily's Spa is located at Emily Griffith's Branch Campus at 1205 Osage St. in Denver.

Furthering Educational Opportunities Through Partnerships

Emily Griffith works closely with industry, area school districts, local community colleges and four-year colleges to create educational pathways for our students to have seamless transitions from high school into credit-bearing college programs, into degree-granting programs and into the workforce. For example, high school students can enroll in a recognized

pre-apprenticeship program, transition into a registered apprenticeship program upon graduation, and then into a degree program at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Similar pathways exist for other programs, including the one that Emily Griffith and Arapahoe Community College have to support students in Computer Networking. Emily Griffith also has a partnership with CSU Global providing Emily Griffith apprentices the opportunity to maximize their program coursework and earn industry certifications for transfer credit into CSU Global programs. These are just some of the partnerships the College has created to benefit students and increase educational and career goal outcomes.

Over the past 100+ years, Emily Griffith Technical College has educated nearly 2 million students who seek pathways toward long-term career advancement. For more information, visit our [website](#) and follow us on [social media](#).



Student in the construction pre-apprenticeship program.
(Photo: Adobe)

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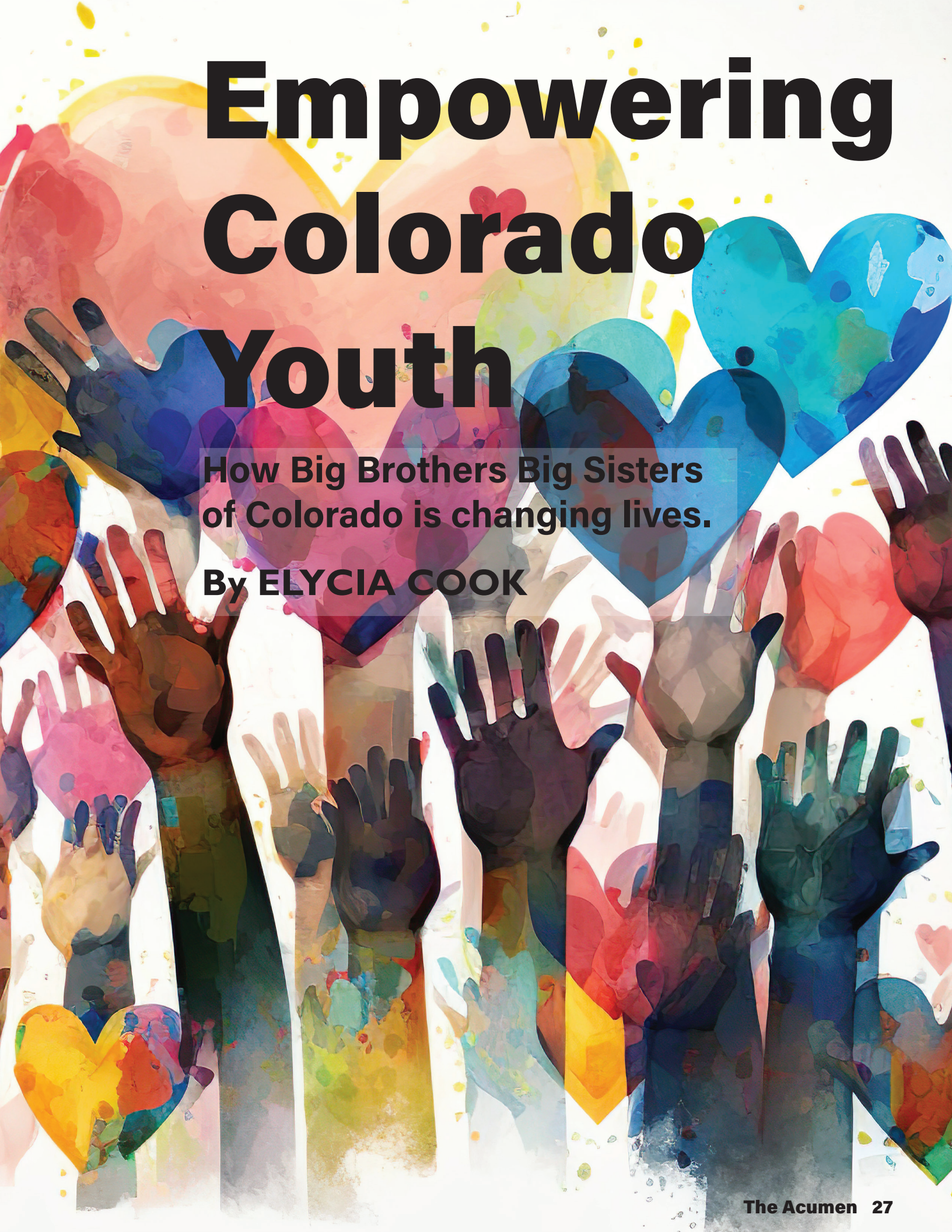


For more information,
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Jevon.Taylor@cbcc.biz





Image: Adobe



Empowering Colorado Youth

**How Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Colorado is changing lives.**

By ELYCIA COOK

“I chose this journey because as an adult I have always wanted to be the person I needed most as a child. I am a personal testimony of the power of mentoring.”

-Elycia Cook, CEO BBBSC

“My life is different because of my mentor,” Robert shared looking back at his time as a Little at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado (BBBSC) from 1993-1997. Robert is one of many who have been impacted by the program. “I am a huge supporter of BBBSC,” Robert shared. “Because I am a product of what happens when a caring adult provides a positive relationship over time.” Today, Robert serves as a Director of Diversity, Health Equity, and Inclusion right here in Colorado and was the recipient of the BBBSC inaugural Community JEDI Award (Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion). Awarded in 2022, this is one of many intentional promises to celebrate the beauty of diversity and honor members of the

BBBSC community including Alumni, whose life reflects a commitment to social justice.

BBBSC was founded in 1918 as an innovative, empowering alternative to the juvenile justice system. Since then, the organization has been making meaningful, monitored mentor matches between adult volunteers- Bigs - and youth - Littles - for over a century. As the needs of young individuals evolve, BBBSC acknowledges the significance of adapting its programs to further honor, champion, and provide culturally relevant experiences for youth at every age and stage of their lives. BBBSC also continues to recognize the beauty and importance of authentic, meaningful cross-cultural, and multi-generational mentor relationships to promote social change, acceptance, cultural exchange, and empathy. Understanding that we still had work to do, BBBSC has embarked on an ambitious journey to diversify its pool of mentors, programs, and community partnerships to expand its reach and relevance to impact even more young lives.

Quote from Elycia. “Born with every obstacle stacked against me, my childhood mirrors that of the many the youth we serve. With the support of mentors who looked like me, or programs and people who saw me as not broken but full of untapped potential, I am a first-generation high school and college graduate. I am also the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award in Mentoring. In 2021, I was named the first African American CEO in the history of BBBSC. I also understand the importance of cultural competency and relevancy of programs so that they feel inclusive and achieve the best possible outcomes for those served. While change and growth is not easy. It is necessary. BBBSC is doing the work, and it is making a difference.”

Reflecting on the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning of 2020-2021, BBBSC understood the critical need to prioritize the mental health and well-being of youth, and flexibility in programming to meet young people where they are. With a steadfast commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) principles, BBBSC has placed these values at the forefront of its mission.



BBBSC Vice President of Programs Polica Houston introducing Aurora Community College President Dr. Mordecai Brownlee at the 2024 Big Futures Program Kickoff (Photo: BBBSC)



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado Alumni Little Isaiah poses with CEO Elycia Cook and his Big Joe at BBBSC's graduation ceremony. Isaiah was an intern through BBBSC's Career Possibilities program and diligently pursuing his engineering studies at Colorado State University. (Photo: BBBSC)

Understanding that mentorship can be a lifeline for many young people, BBBSC has amplified its efforts to bridge the mentoring gap. Shockingly, statistics reveal that 1 in 3 youth lack a mentor or role model— a disparity that BBBSC is determined to address and alleviate.

To address this pressing need, BBBSC has adapted its programs to offer a portfolio of mentoring services better aligned with youth needs. Recognizing the power of youth voice, peer support, and post-secondary readiness, BBBSC has introduced group and peer-to-peer mentoring, and college and career readiness wrap around services to these programs as well as their signature 1-1 volunteer adult to youth mentoring programs.

One such initiative, the Big Futures Program, is specifically designed to equip high school-aged Littles with the social emotional support, skills, training, and resources they need to navigate the challenges of adolescence and prepare for a successful future. From college and career

readiness to essential life skills such as financial literacy and healthy decision-making, Big Futures empowers Littles to envision and pursue their dreams with confidence, determination, and increased social capital.

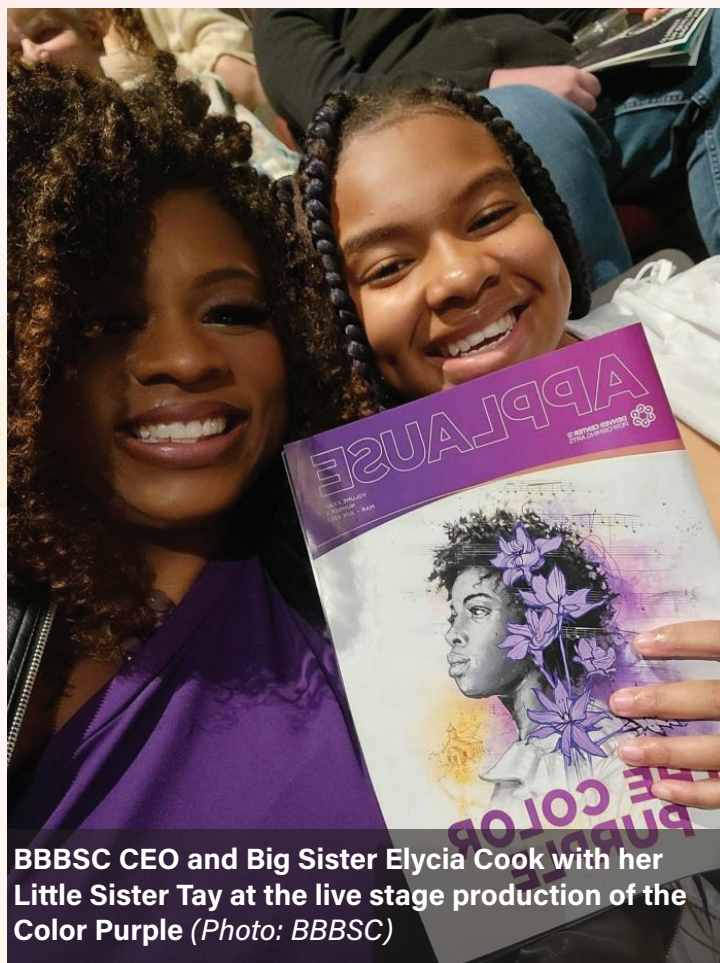
In 2023, BBBSC welcomed to the staff Polica Houston, a Denver native and a proud graduate of Denver Public Schools, as Vice President of Programs. For the first time in BBBSC history, two people of color are serving on the executive leadership team. Polica is no stranger to the power of mentoring and celebrating Black Excellence. He is the son of one of Denver's greatest heroes of our time, Patricia Houston the founder of, "EspeciallyMe" which for over twenty years has shined a light on African American girls, through recognition, celebration, and scholarships. With his background in higher education and K-12 as a teacher and school administrator in the hearts of our communities, he has played an integral role in launching the Big Futures program.

Quote from Polica on Big Futures. “BBBSC is ensuring youth are provided programming that features first-class experiences and support necessary for achieving a prosperous future. This includes exposing youth to successful professionals who look like them and kindle the wick of intentional action required for post-secondary success.”

As a participant in the BBBSC’s Career Possibilities Program, BBBSC Alumni Little Isaiah completed a paid internship with BOA Technology. Under the mentorship of his Big and within the dynamic environment of the BOA internship, Isaiah found inspiration to pursue a career in mechanical engineering. “A lot of people are not exposed to this type of field or work; they don’t know that it’s possible.” Isaiah shared while reflecting on his time at BOA. “You can’t take opportunities that you don’t know about.” Isaiah is currently studying engineering at Colorado State University.



BBBSC Alumni Little Jonathan and His Big Brother Quentin
BBBSC Sports Buddies Program. (Photo: BBBSC)



BBBSC CEO and Big Sister Elycia Cook with her Little Sister Tay
at the live stage production of the Color Purple (Photo: BBBSC)

In a significant move to expand its reach and impact, BBBSC acquired the STARS (Students Teaching About Relationships and Success) Program, adding an evidence-informed, cross-age, peer mentoring initiative to their already evidence based 1-1 mentoring programs. Uniquely tailored for youth ages 11 to 18. The STARS Program occurs within schools, pairing Youth Mentors in high school with groups of three to four Youth Mentees who are at least two years (or two grade levels) younger. This strategic acquisition underscores BBBSC’s unwavering commitment to providing diverse and effective mentorship opportunities to youth of all backgrounds. The many benefits of peer mentoring are deep and wide. The greatest being something that BBBSC refers to as MentorLife™ which translates to training youth at an early age to always invest in someone and to always have someone investing in them. In the STARS program many of the youth mentees become youth mentors. Data tells us that these youth are 48% more likely to volunteer in their community as adults. Given that 84% of these youth mentors



BBBSC Alumni Little Isaiah Phorson interning at BOA Technology with other BBBSC Littles
 (Photo: BBBSC)

are people of color, the adoption of this program is another BBBSC strategy to diversify our future pipeline of adult 1-1 mentors.

A participant, James joined the STARS program at age 12. He is now 22 and in the US Navy. "Connection is one of the most important things you can have in life," he shared. "I do not know what I'd be doing if I didn't have my mentors in my life."

BBBSC's commitment to JEDI principles remains steadfast, serving as a guiding star for the organization's endeavors. By actively cultivating relationships between youth of color and mentors, BBBSC hopes to nurture a more inclusive society, where every individual can flourish.

Despite efforts, BBBSC confronts a pressing challenge in meeting the escalating demand for mentors, especially men of color. With 400 youth currently on BBBSC's waitlist, 75% of whom are boys, the organization emphasizes the urgent need for representation within its pool of mentors. "You don't have to be perfect; you just have to be present," affirmed Elycia, BBBSC's CEO and an active Big.

Looking ahead, BBBSC remains committed to its overarching goal of empowering every young person to graduate high school with a plan for their future and a mentor whose impact will last a lifetime. To join this impactful mission and make a difference in the lives of youth, visit BigLittleColorado.org to learn about the opportunities to get involved. Together, we can build a brighter and more promising future.

A Bridge to Better Health

Anthem is helping Colorado employees and their families stay covered.

By CHARLENE TAM

Happy family with three children sitting on sofa together at home
(Photo: Anthem, Getty)





Children outdoors blowing bubbles. (Photo: Anthem, Getty)

Every business is unique, and so is every mix of employees. You may have full-time, part-time, and even seasonal workers. With recent changes to Medicaid eligibility, some of your part-time and seasonal employees may be without health coverage. Anthem can connect you with the information you need to guide uninsured employees to coverage that can help protect their health and their budget.

What's changed about Medicaid eligibility and renewals?

Before the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), Medicaid eligibility was reviewed each year. This process of checking eligibility is sometimes referred to as Medicaid Renewal, Medicaid Redetermination, Medicaid Recertification, or Medicaid Unwinding.¹

During the PHE, most reviews of Medicaid eligibility were paused. Now eligibility reviews have started again, and some of your employees may no longer qualify. This could be because of changes in age, income, or other factors.



Family dancing together. (Photo: Anthem, Getty)

Healthy employees are a good step toward a healthy business

According to polls, when employees feel their company cares about them, it builds more than just loyalty.² Companies that make their employees feel cared for have higher productivity, profitability, and customer engagement. They also have fewer safety incidents and lower turnover.

Employees who feel cared for by their employer are:²

- 69% less likely to look for a new job.
- 3x more likely to be engaged at work.
- 5x more likely to say their company is a good place to work.
- 5x more likely to trust the organization's leadership.
- 71% less likely to experience burnout.
- 36% more likely to be thriving overall.



Happy family with three children together at home
(Photo: Anthem, Getty)

Anthem can help you and your employees navigate Medicaid renewals

We can guide your employees through their options and help them find coverage to meet their needs and budget. Our decision support tool, at bridging-better-health.com, helps employees understand if they can reenroll in Medicaid and how to enroll in an Individual and Family plan or Medicare plan. It even matches employees to other benefits they may qualify for, such as food, child care, and housing.

For those who need to choose an Individual and Family plan, Anthem plans offer high-quality, low-cost coverage for your employees' overall health and well-being. Our coverage includes annual wellness exams and preventive care visits that come at no additional cost and \$0 virtual visits so they have access to 24/7 care at their convenience.³

Plans include our SydneySM Health app, which gives your employees an easier way to access their care and benefits so they can stay on top of their health. The Sydney Health app offers:

- An interactive chat feature, so employees can get answers and connect with the right resources at the right time.
- Personalized alerts, reminders, tips, and doctor recommendations.
- Access to digital ID cards, benefits and claims, wellness resources, and Member Services.

With Sydney Health, employees can manage their health and their benefits all in one place.



Dad and daughter tea party. (Photo: Anthem, Getty)

Together we can help your employees stay healthy

Visit bridging-better-health.com to download resources to share with your employees. Your help connecting them to the right resources will be a driving force in keeping your valued employees healthy and productive.



Images:
Anthem, Getty)

1 Anthem: *What Is Medicaid Redetermination?* (accessed February 16, 2024): anthem.com.

2 Gallup: *Leaders: Ignore Employee Wellbeing At Your Own Risk* (July 6, 2023): gallup.com.

3 Nationally recommended preventive care services received in network have no copay and no deductible requirement. Virtual care visits, including medical chats and video visits using the Sydney Health app, are at no cost to members for most plans. Those enrolled in high-deductible health plans associated with a health savings account and catastrophic plans must first meet their deductible. Virtual care visits refer to medical chats and/or video consultation, as deemed appropriate by a licensed physician.

In addition to using a telehealth service, you can receive in-person or virtual care from your own doctor or another healthcare provider in your plan's network. If you receive care from a doctor or healthcare provider not in your plan's network, your share of the costs may be higher. You may also receive a bill for any charges not covered by your health plan.

Sydney Health is offered through an arrangement with Caredon Digital Platforms, a separate company offering mobile application services on behalf of your health plan.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Anthem is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc.



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Building a Legacy for the Next Generation of Black Women Entrepreneurs

By ANGELA DAVIS

Black/African American women are one of the fastest growing demographics of entrepreneurs in America and are key to driving small business growth. In fact, according to the [Wells Fargo 2024 Impact of Women-Owned Businesses Report](#), between 2019 and 2023, Black/African American women-owned businesses saw average revenues increase 32.7%, compared to 12.1% for all women-owned businesses.¹

To offer perspective, after the 2008 financial crisis, women-owned businesses had not only recovered but had surpassed average revenue levels from before the crisis to 2008: \$172,000 in 2019 compared to \$151,700 before the crisis. However, this was not the case for Black/African American women-owned businesses, whose average revenue was \$35,600 in 2019 compared to \$40,400 prior to the crisis. Fast forward to the COVID-19 pandemic, Black/African American women-owned businesses came out stronger and now, Black/African American women business owners have outpaced growth between 2022 and 2023 in terms of employment and revenue compared to all women-owned businesses.¹

Whether starting, stabilizing, or growing businesses, Black/African American women-owned small businesses are expanding. Today more than ever, it is crucial to build wealth for the next wave of Black/African American women entrepreneurs. Supporting the future of Black/African American women-owned businesses requires focusing on key areas, such as addressing gaps in funding, growing access to capital, and providing robust mentorship opportunities.

Filling the gaps in funding

Despite starting new businesses at high proportions, many Black women and women of color obtain funding at lower rates. Research



Images: Adobe

shows that women of color receive less than 0.2% of venture-capital funding.² Black women also encounter similar barriers in accessing capital, with about 61% self-funding their business and exhibiting a higher level of debt.³ For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many Black/African American businesses experienced difficulty attaining Federal stimulus payments. Furthermore, in 2020, there was a decline in Black/African American owned businesses.¹

Building wealth for the next generation of Black/African American women entrepreneurs starts with building resources and growing capital for the entrepreneurs of today.

Improving access to capital

It's important to acknowledge that access to capital remains a challenge for Black/African American women-owned businesses, even in the face of increasing revenue. According to the [Wells Fargo 2024 Impact of Women-Owned Businesses Report](#), Black/African American women-owned businesses employ approximately 9.4 workers and generate \$1,037,900 compared to all women-owned businesses, which employ approximately 8.5 workers and generate \$1,602,500.⁴

While barriers to funding persist for many Black/African American women-owned small businesses, new bank and philanthropic programs are now being built to address this gap and help Black women identify capital opportunities to build sustainable small businesses. In addition to traditional lending, working with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and Minority Depository

Institutions (MDIs) can create an ecosystem of support that provides additional avenues to accessing capital. These institutions specifically work with underserved entrepreneurs including those in low-to-moderate income areas and minority populations.

Supporting these organizations and their mission was at the heart of the creation of Wells Fargo's [Open for Business Fund](#), an industry-leading effort that has donated roughly \$420 million to support nonprofits who serve small businesses; the [Small Business Resource Navigator](#), an online portal helping connect small business owners to potential financing options and technical assistance through CDFIs; the [Capital Pathways Workbook](#), a free resource that helps entrepreneurs map their capital needs to business goals and objectives; and a [\\$70 million fund in partnership with Hello Alice](#) to improve access to credit and capital for underserved entrepreneurs.

By empowering Black/African American women-owned businesses with the financial resources they need, we enable businesses to scale, grow, and build for the future. Fostering the growth of Black/African American women-owned small businesses through improved access to capital is an investment in the long-term success of the business. By dismantling financial barriers and building an environment where businesses can thrive, generational wealth can be an attainable goal for all.

Harnessing mentorship

Investing in education and mentorship programs specifically designed for Black/African American women entrepreneurs can provide valuable resources and guidance. By addressing systemic barriers and supporting equitable opportunities, we can contribute to the sustainable growth of Black/African American women-owned small businesses, ultimately playing a part in building lasting generational wealth.

This level of support is at the heart of [Milestone Circles](#), a mentoring program for women entrepreneurs offered by the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center and funded by the



Images: Adobe

Wells Fargo Foundation. The majority of the participants, (86%), have been Black, African American, and/or Afro-Caribbean, and have learned to improve their business alongside a circle of fellow entrepreneurs. Building strong business and community networks can significantly enhance the success and sustainability of all women-owned small businesses.

As Black/African American women continue taking the lead in business ownership, we all must continue taking steps to maintain and support their momentum. By addressing both systemic barriers and promoting proactive support, including improving access to capital and mentorship opportunities for Black/African American women-owned businesses, we can pave the way for sustained growth and build pathways for the next generation.

¹2024 Impact of Women-Owned Businesses Report, <https://www.wippeducationinstitute.org/research>

²"The Comprehensive Case for Investing More VC Money in Women-Led Startups," Harvard Business Review, September 18, 2017. <https://hbr.org/2017/09/the-comprehensive-case-for-investing-more-vc-money-in-women-led-startups>

³"Who is driving Black business growth? Insights from the latest data on Black-owned businesses," Brookings, May 24, 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/who-is-driving-black-business-growth-insights-from-the-latest-data-on-black-owned-businesses/>.

⁴2024 Impact of Women-Owned Businesses Report, <https://www.wippeducationinstitute.org/research>

⁵"Supporting the Wave of New Black Women Entrepreneurs," Wells Fargo Stories, August 30, 2023. <https://stories.wf.com/supporting-the-wave-of-new-black-women-entrepreneurs/>.

Angela Davis

Senior Risk Consultant, Wells Fargo

Angela Davis is a seasoned professional with a strong background in risk assessment and management. With over a decade of experience assessing risk at Wells Fargo Bank, Angela has honed her expertise in navigating complex business landscapes and ensuring optimal risk mitigation strategies. Throughout her career, Angela has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, successfully leading teams through dynamic business strategies.

Her ability to analyze and assess potential risks, combined with her sharp strategic thinking, has consistently yielded positive outcomes, and contributed to the overall success of the organization.

Angela's dedication to excellence and her meticulous attention to detail have earned her a reputation for delivering results. She is a forward-thinking professional who thrives in challenging environments, leveraging her expertise to develop innovative risk management solutions that align with business objectives. Outside of her professional endeavors, Angela is passionate about helping others and giving back to her community. She actively volunteers with various local organizations, leveraging her expertise and experience to educate and empower individuals on closing the wealth gap. With an impressive track record and a comprehensive skill set Angela has worked across the Denver Metro area to provide real change in her community with at risk youth and women rights. Angela is focused on bridging the gap between communities and law enforcement that serve these areas, she is positive that she will be an intricate part of this process.

Angela is a motivational speaker, Director of the Youth at Zion Baptist Church, she is the Communications Chair for Colorado Enterprise Impact Wells Fargo Employee Resource Networking Team, she is the Co-Chair for the Colorado Black and African American ERN, Enterprise Women's Connection ERN as a Mentor, and the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce fellow for Leadership Denver.

Angela loves life and makes it a habit to take chances, she lives by the only chances you will regret are the chances you did not take. She believes that hard work and dedication to your craft is the journey and while you are in the journey your dreams manifest.

Angela is the mother to a beautiful daughter Jayla who is a Senior at Penn State University. Being a single mother taught her to live life on your own terms only then will you experience things you only dreamed about.



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Images: Adobe

Molson Coors joins National Black Brewers Association's Business Council

By MICHAEL NORDMAN

Company invests \$50,000 toward education, resources and tools for emerging and established Black brewers across the U.S.

Molson Coors recently announced a partnership with the National Black Brewers Association (NB2A) that includes joining the NB2A Business Council as a gold member and a \$50,000 investment in the organization to provide essential tools, education and resources for emerging and established Black

brewers nationwide. James Gleaves, president of Molson Coors-owned Revolver Brewing in Granbury, Texas, has also been appointed as the company's representative on the NB2A Business Council, a platform for industry leaders to share insights and provide guidance.

"As a Black man in brewery leadership, I recognize the importance of diverse voices and perspectives in shaping the industry's future," Gleaves said. "I'm proud to be able to use my decades of brewing and management experience to help bring a new generation of industry leaders into the beer business."

NB2A was founded in 2022 to support and empower current Black brewers with enhanced skills and knowledge, cultivate

opportunities for future Black brewers and promote training and recruiting efforts in beer industry fields such as sales, finance and technology. "Molson Coors brings significant value as a partner to NB2A, enhancing the credibility of our organization and strengthening our shared commitment to a more equitable and vibrant brewing landscape," said Kevin Asato, executive director of the National Black Brewers Association. "Molson Coors will help our organization provide members with essential tools, education and other critical resources that will uplift and advance the Black brewing community."

In addition to championing Black brewers through its partnership with NB2A, Molson Coors is dedicated to fostering

economic opportunities in the communities it serves. The company's Celebrate Tomorrow initiative, which has donated more than \$6 million since 2020, actively supports North American organizations dedicated to promoting economic opportunity and pathways to employment. For more information on Molson Coors, visit: www.molsoncoors.com.

About Molson Coors Beverage Company

For more than two centuries, Molson Coors has brewed beverages that unite people for all life's moments. From Coors Light, Miller Lite, Molson Canadian, Carling, Madri Excepcional and Staropramen to Coors Banquet, Blue Moon Belgian White, Leinenkugel's Summer Shandy, Vizzy Hard Seltzer, Topo Chico Hard Seltzer, Simply Spiked Lemonade, ZOA Energy, Blue Run Spirits, Creemore Springs

and more, Molson Coors produces some of the most beloved and iconic brands ever made. While the company's history is rooted in beer, Molson Coors offers a modern portfolio that expands beyond the beer aisle with energy drinks, bottled spirits, ready-to drink cocktails, cider and more. To learn more about Molson Coors Beverage Company, visit: molsoncoors.com.

About the National Black Brewers Association

Launched in May of 2023, The National Black Brewers Association also known as NB2A is a 501c6 membership-based non-profit organization governed by a dynamic Board of Directors comprised of the most experienced and successful Black brewery owners and brewmasters across the country. Founded by Kevin Johnson, owner of Oak Park Brewery, the organization is led by Executive Director,

Kevin Asato and Alana Koenig-Busey, Program Manager boasting a dynamic Board of Directors comprised of around 15 Black brewery owners and brewmasters across the United States. Anyone can be a part of or support the association whether you are directly associated with the brewing industry or not - we encourage all to be part of this first-of-its-kind non-profit that is committed to: promoting the Black brewing community, increasing the number of African American individuals in the brewing industry at all levels of production, especially ownership and brew-masters, exercising influence by developing and advocating for effective policies, fostering historical context, and legacy surrounding African American influence on brewing in the US.

For more information please visit: nationalblackbrewersassociation.org



Images: Adobe



Photo: Smoky Hill Engineering

Empowering Growth: Smoky Hill Engineering LLC in the Engineering Landscape

By DEMEKE B. ASHEBO

"In the dynamic realm of modern engineering, where innovation thrives and possibilities are limitless, empowering growth is not just a goal, but a necessity."

In an era of technological advancement and emerging challenges, the engineering landscape stands as a testament to human creativity and innovation. From groundbreaking infrastructure projects to cutting-edge developments in renewable energy and artificial intelligence, engineers continually push the boundaries of what is possible. Yet, through this concerted effort of growth, one crucial element which remains paramount is empowerment. Individuals, industries, and other stakeholders need to be empowered to appreciate the role of engineering in changing lives, especially in coming up with solutions to pressing societal needs. What is required is appreciating innovation and establishing sustainable engineering answers in different facets of the economy.

As we talk about innovation, solution finding, and resilience in the engineering industry, we cannot

alienate Smoky Hill Engineering LLC from the picture. Established six years ago, Smoky Hill Engineering proudly stands as a black-owned company, empowering growth in Denver. With a commitment to excellence, we specialize in delivering innovative engineering solutions tailored to our clients' needs. Our dedication to quality and diversity drives our success in every project we undertake. As a distinguished civil and structural engineering consulting company headquartered in Colorado, the company has tenured in offering exceptional services in civil and structural engineering, QA/QC consulting and inspections, construction administration support, and permit support. As such, it has attracted a huge base of clientele ranging from developers, small and large contractors, builders, EPC companies, architect offices, public agencies, power companies, and renewable energy companies.

At Smoky Hill Engineering LLC, our vision goes beyond technical expertise. We create an environment where innovation, sustainability, and community thrive in harmony. We envision ourselves not only as problem solvers but also as catalysts for future growth, utilizing our diverse set of professionals who are experienced in engineering. It is also important to note that our vision is not bound by limitation; we are flexible enough to accommodate the new changes in

the field of civil and structural engineering. This is achieved through continuous research and innovation, where we embrace new technologies to provide solutions. Collaborating with clients and our partners has helped us learn new challenges, enabling us to forge a path that is brighter and sustainable for the future.

Advancements in the Engineering Industry

Advancement in structural and civil engineering remains the cornerstone of the infrastructure and urban landscape in the future. The ever-increasing population is attributed to this, and therefore, there is a need to intensify sustainable development in the industry. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), it is estimated that the infrastructure gap in the United States is valued at \$2 trillion, and it would require until 2025 to meet the current gap. This underscores the importance of infrastructure innovation to seal this gap and guarantee sustainability in the future.

Due to the need to address the emerging needs in the industry, there has been the emergence of different technologies in the engineering industry. The innovations have been geared towards saving the cost of construction, ensuring efficiency, and satisfying the needs of the

clients. One such breaking innovation is Building Information Modeling (BIM), which has been instrumental in ensuring project efficiency and collaboration. A study by Dodge Construction Network established that 93% of architects, engineers, and contractors reported to have used this technology in the previous year. The steady rise in the use of BIM is pegged on the ability to allow different experts to visualize the project and analyze it before it starts. This mitigates errors, reduces delays, and guarantees the overall success of the project.

Additionally, the appreciation of the use of advanced materials such as carbon fibers and new construction techniques has transformed structural design and durability. It is estimated that the global demand for composite materials by 2020 was valued at \$6.8 billion and is projected to rise to \$10.4 billion by 2025. The need for lightweight and durable materials for infrastructure projects has necessitated this surge. Recently, sustainability has emerged as an area of concern in the industry, with most companies resorting to green technologies. This trend has seen a shift towards energy-efficient building designs and sustainable infrastructure solutions that mitigate climate change and conserve the environment.

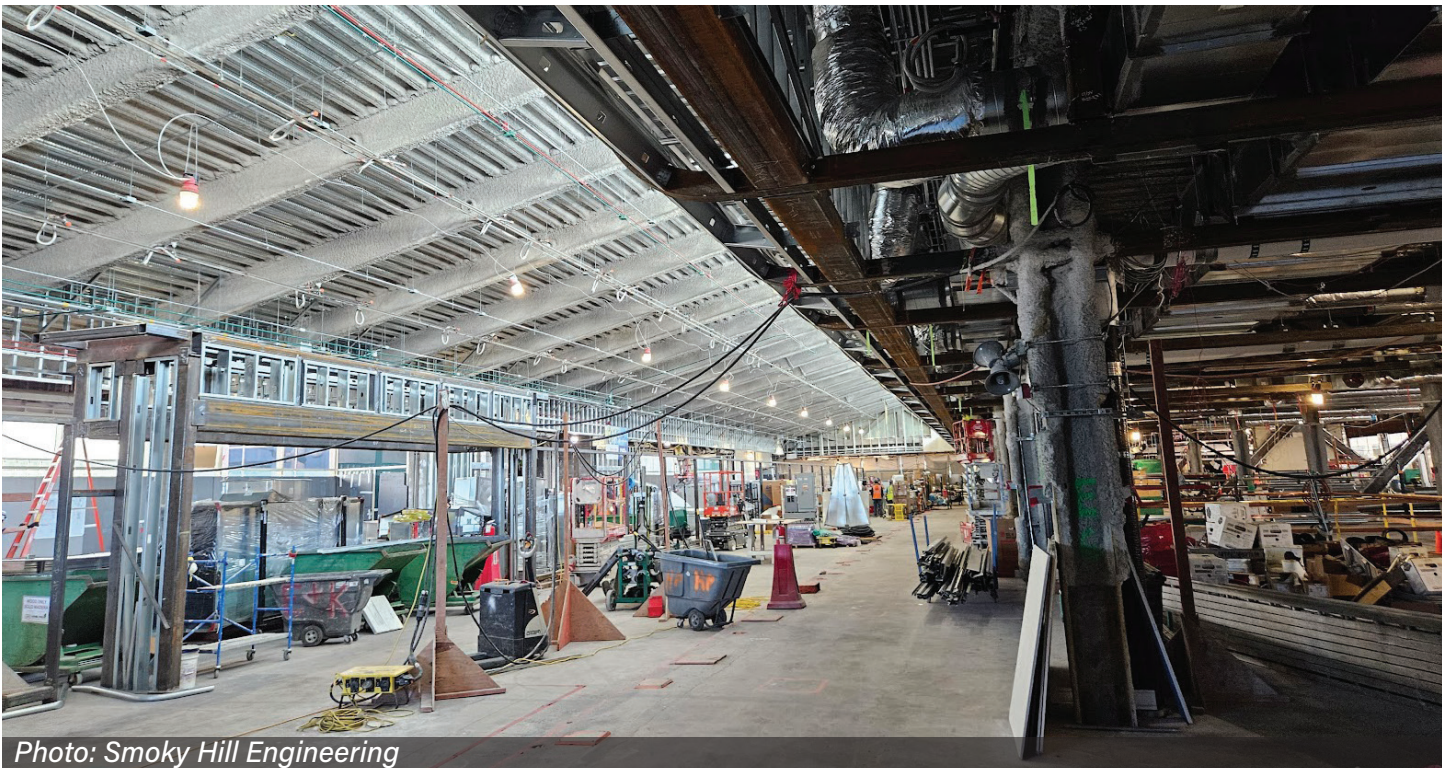


Photo: Smoky Hill Engineering

How, then, is Smoky Hill Engineering LLC doing to embrace the new changes? It is essential to note that the company is alive to innovation to ensure sustainability. One way we have embraced change in the company is by investing in research and development to understand new construction materials and techniques to guarantee sustainability. We consider aspects such as energy-efficient building, incorporating renewable materials, exploring renewable energy in our operations, and all these have enabled us to reduce our environmental carbon footprint.

In addition to innovation, Smoky Hill Engineering LLC has incorporated the importance of reskilling its base of professionals. We understand that there are new technologies and techniques of construction in the industry, which our experts might need to be made aware of. In order to remain relevant and offer top-notch services, we empower our workforce through specialized programs to thrive in an evolving industry. Through fostering a culture of learning and innovation, the company has always remained ahead of new practices, ensuring that we are able to deal with complex problems creatively. Further, we engage our clients and partners in the identification of opportunities for sustainable development. Prioritizing sustainability has emerged as a strong pillar for the company, not only for regulatory compliance but also to show proper stewardship of the resources.

Case Studies and Project Highlights

In our quest to solve the infrastructure problem, we have completed a number of projects to success. This has built our portfolio and largely confirmed our commitment to changing the lives of the communities through civil and structural engineering. Some of the notable projects are;

The Denver International Airport Concourse Expansion Projects

This was an ambitious project, the main objective of which was to expand Denver International Airport (DEN) capacity by 30%. The expansion happened on the B-East, C-East, A-West, and B-West Concourses, which are critical infrastructures for an airport to function effectively. Through collaboration with contractors, Smoky Hill Engineering LLC team of experts provided services in different design and construction stages. This entails providing the layout of the project, ensuring the project's integrity, and deploying the latest technologies to give travelers a great experience. On completion of this project, Denver International Airport reported an increase in gate capacity by 30%. This meant accommodation of more flights, heightened passenger capacity, and reduced congestion.



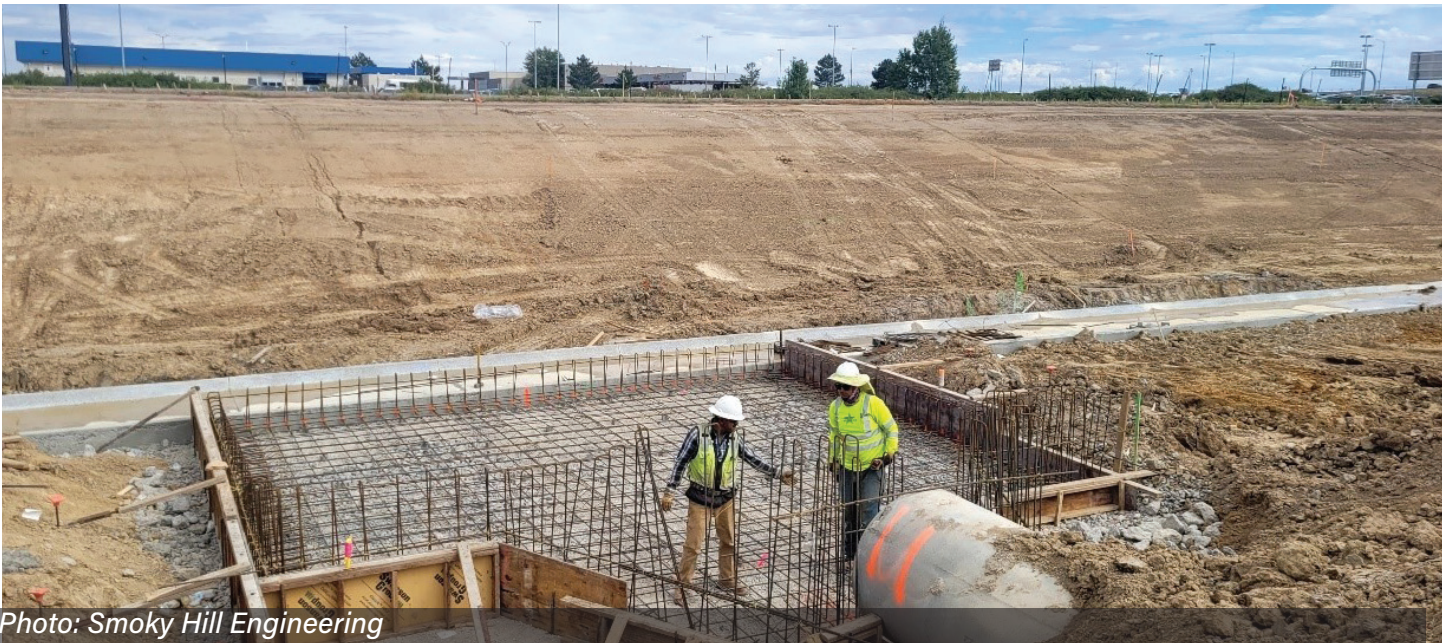


Photo: Smoky Hill Engineering

DEN Center of Equity and Excellence, Denver International Airport

Smoky Hill Engineering teamed up with Stantec and Studio Completiva in the Center of Equity and Excellence in Aviation project. CEEA is a first of its kind development that brings together the community, DEN, CCD, and the airline industry. CEEA will be an integral part of DEN's Vision 100, a strategic vision to successfully meet the challenge of future growth and changes in the industry. According to DEN's website, "Vision 100 is DEN's strategic plan that will enable DEN to prepare for and reach 100 million annual passengers. The strategic plan will serve as a blueprint to align decision-making and enable accountability so DEN can thoughtfully prepare to serve 100 million passengers in the next 8-10 years. This plan will guide DEN's work over the next 3-5 years, the first phase of reaching Vision 100." CEEA will be located on the fourth level of the existing Hotel Transit. Complex (HTC) at DEN south of Jeppesen Terminal. The tenant improvement will comprise approximately 65,000 square feet and be integrated into the existing building structure, circulation, and MEP systems. The fourth floor which DEN or the Westin Hotel is not utilizing, will be converted into an innovative center that houses event space(s), lecture/training rooms, research/innovation lab, offices for CEEA, DSBO, Workforce, and Commerce Hub along with a press room, executive conference room and support spaces such as restrooms,

a dedicated room for childcare and a kitchen. Smoky Hill Engineering serves as the structural engineer of record for the project.

Design of Fiber Optics Communication Line Plan and Profile

The client of this project engaged Smoky Hill Engineering in planning and designing over 100 miles of fiber optics communication line in the southeast Denver metro area. Our dedicated team designed the fiber optic line and helped the client obtain permits from various jurisdictions. Our team considered the complexities of installing the fiber optic while ensuring less disturbance to the public during the design process. As the installation traversed a large area, we vouch for our team's tenacity to maintain proper coordination, which brought the success of this project. This project has greatly improved communication in the Southeast Denver metro area by enhancing connectivity and a reliable network for the public and businesses in the region. The contribution of Smoky Hill Engineering towards improving connectivity in the southeast Denver metro area cannot be overstated; it has a real impact on the community.

Third-Party Inspection Services

Our third-party inspection service is focused on offering unbiased inspection of both private

and public projects. Our team inspects the construction works, ensuring that everything is done according to the plan and meets the required standards. As part of our mandate, our team visited different construction projects within Denver and compared the work being done on the ground to approved drawings and specifications. We prepared our inspection reports containing the findings and corrective actions. Through our inspections, we have provided valuable assessments of both private and public construction works. The final reports, which are shared with the clients, have enabled them to remain compliant and understand where to make improvements. Through our informed inspections, therefore, we pride ourselves on enabling the successful completion of different construction and installation projects.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

Smoky Hill Engineering LLC understands the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is because the company collaborates with different clients and stakeholders; therefore, being aware of these matters is not only a requirement but obligatory. We are in a field where we interact with new faces every day, and to succeed, we need to strike a balance with every party that does business with us. Also, the company recognizes that diversity and inclusion are ethical imperatives and essential drivers of innovation, creativity, and organizational success.

One way through which Smoky Hill Engineering LLC has demonstrated diversity, equity, and inclusion is through the hiring process. The company seeks different skills, qualifications, disciplines, and communities to ensure that its workforce reflects the community it is serving. This has permitted the creation of a working environment where every worker feels valued, respected, and empowered to succeed. Also, the company closely works with partners and organizations that promote diversity and equality in the engineering industry. Through participating in forums that support diversity-focused events and community outreach programs, the company has cultivated its niche in this matter. From a broader perspective, the engineering industry can apply different strategies to ensure

compliance with diversity, equity, and inclusion principles. Understanding these approaches is essential, especially in the current era, where there is a high level of labor integration. These intentional tactics would help companies in the engineering field address systemic barriers and allow workers to thrive:

- ***Putting an inclusive hiring process in place.*** Employers in the engineering industry can ensure inclusivity and diversity in recruitment by blindly screening resumes and reaching out to underserved communities to apply for jobs. Also, they can partner with schools, colleges, and universities to have a wider pool of candidates.
- ***Providing training on diversity, equity, and inclusion.*** Providing employees with such training gives them knowledge of cultural diversity, inclusive leadership, and unconscious bias. The program creates an inclusive corporate culture that respects everybody.
- ***Creating inclusive policies.*** Reviewing the organization's policies is elemental in achieving equality and inclusivity. An organization can consider implementing flexible working hours and also consider issues of workers with disabilities.
- ***Fostering communication and collaboration.*** Engineering companies should eliminate the barriers to communication by embracing open communication and consultations. This makes everyone feel part of the company and appreciated for their work.
- ***Continuous engagement in community outreach programs.*** Being actively involved in community programs focused on diversity and inclusion portrays a company as responsible, cultivating a positive image in the community. This can be achieved through sponsoring educational programs for underserved people and maybe participating in mentorship events.

The list is not exhaustive, but it shows a glimpse of how the engineering industry can become active in dealing with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusivity. As such, a company can come up with an innovative strategy that is localized to

the region of operation. The final goal is to unlock the full potential of all employees and drive sustainable growth and innovation.

Future Outlook

The world of engineering presents opportunities and challenges as we navigate the changes in technology and environmental concerns. The industry has opportunities to explore renewable energy, smart infrastructure, and sustainable development. In the renewable energy sector, there have been concerted efforts and campaigns towards adopting wind and solar energy, which are clean and friendly to the environment. Equally, at present, improved technology has necessitated discussion on the importance of smart infrastructure. This kind of infrastructure is driven by the Internet of Things (IoT) and data analytics, guaranteeing efficiency and optimizing resource utilization. Similarly, emphasis on sustainability presents opportunities for engineers to design eco-friendly solutions that mitigate environmental impact.

Despite the opportunities for the future, there are challenges, such as the need for continuous skills development to remain ahead of the technological advancement in the engineering industry. Engineers should be prepared to learn new methodologies, use new tools, and collaborate interdisciplinarily to upskill their knowledge in the field. Also, there is a challenge of aging infrastructure, which is unable to support the new developments. Besides, the sudden increases in urban population make it challenging for engineers to ensure sustainability, and these are the kinds of hurdles that require immediate solutions to drive positive change.

Smoky Hill Engineering LLC is prepared to deal with the challenges above and is also set to tap into opportunities that the engineering industry presents. We envision a future filled with growth, innovation, and expansion as we seek to deal with competition and become a leader in the engineering industry. With a commitment to serving the community, ensuring sustainability, and pursuing excellence, our company's dream incorporates several strategies for future growth.

- **Diversification of services.** Smoky Hill Engineering LLC wants to meet the evolving needs of its clients by expanding its services. This entails covering all sectors of the economy and increasing the number of experts.
- **Geographical expansion.** We seek to expand our operations to other markets, both locally and internationally. This is through forming partnerships, alliances, or satellite offices.
- **Investment in technology and innovation.** We appreciate that technology is evolving, and we must be part. Smoky Hill Engineering LLC aims to invest in cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning and engage in research and development.
- **Talent development and retention.** Understanding that employees are our greatest asset, we aim to transform our development and retention strategies. The company intends to invest more in the training and development of the employees and also offer competitive remunerations and benefits.
- **Sustainability and social responsibility.** As a responsible company, Smoky Hill Engineering LLC is focused on integrating sustainability and responsibility virtues in its operations. We aim to be an example of environmental stewardship, community engagement, diversity, inclusivity, and ethical governance.

In summary, the field of engineering is undergoing different changes influenced by external factors. Surviving in the industry requires adaptation and flexibility to align with emerging needs. Smoky Hill Engineering LLC's vision is well affiliated with the changes and is ready for growth and expansion. This is because our foundation is built on sustainability, excellence, and social responsibility.

If you would like to learn about Smoky Hill Engineering LLC, please visit our website at <https://www.smokyhilleng.com/>. This is a good starting point. We would like to hear from you, answer your questions, and also learn from our array of projects executed and services offered.



Photo: MilesWest Group

Creating a Supportive Community

By KELLY WEST

Over the last three years, we have grown from a single proprietor to a small team, leveraging 40+ years of real estate and relocation experience to create a consultancy focused on creating a fair and level playing field for our clients, their employees, and their supplier partners. We do this through strategic advisory, inclusive supply chain ecosystem design, benchmarking, human capital management and business optimization consulting services. We are always looking for ways to add value, organically. We listen to our clients; we create an understanding of the need and then we either help create a process to manage it or we find a partner to provide it. Our goal is to create growth opportunities for our clients and everyone else around us, to add opportunities for generational wealth creation in underserved communities and to leave the Earth a little bit better than how we found it.

Growing up in Park Hill, our parents taught us that we could achieve anything we set our minds to, be it becoming a world-renowned jazz musician, like my late brother, Ron, a well-respected Doctor of Psychology, like my sister Shari, or an amazing call center manager, like my brother Johnathan. We have found the success that our parents wished for us. Today, I

serve as the President of the Board of Directors for the Denver Chapter of the Institute for Supplier Management, the Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee for the Worldwide Employee Relocation Council and the Founder and Board President of The Mobility Collective. I give back by mentoring other small diverse business owners through The Mom Project and SpringGR. I am proud to be the mother of 3 spectacular children Josh, Anna, and Patrick, who are accomplished in their own right and the daughter of two spectacular parents, Jane and Fay (deceased) Miles.

I like to consider myself a Denver native, but the truth is we relocated to Denver from Indiana right



Photo: MilesWest Group

before I started 3rd grade at the former Phillips Elementary School on Montview and Monaco. I went on to Smiley Jr High before graduating from East High School and attending Boston University on the Martin Luther King Academic Scholarship. When I was five months pregnant, I left my studies at Boston University and moved back home to Denver. The only person willing to hire a single, pregnant, college drop-out was a local Realtor named Alice Marsh. At a time when diversity wasn't talked about, Alice lived it. Our team was made up of people from every walk of life; differently abled, Black, gay, white, veterans, Latino, Jewish, men and women. Her only expectation was that we get along and get our work done, and we did through highs and lows.

That experience, as well as the myriad of experiences that I have had as a Black female executive over the last 35 years, has influenced my desire to always find ways to lead across, lift-up and empower everyone regardless of who they are, how they identify or where they are from.



Kelly West is the Founder and CEO of the MilesWest Group, LLC a certified Black and Woman owned Company. The MilesWest Group is a professional services consultancy primarily focused on Business Strategy, Human Capital Management, and Inclusive Supply Chain Ecosystem Design.



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Safeguard Your Future

By LISA WILLIAMS



Photo: Lisa Williams Agency

I am a second-generation Denver native, growing up in the Park Hill area. My significant other and I have four children (young adults) between the two of us. I have seen firsthand the changing landscape of the Denver Metro and have felt the impact of those changes. I have 30 years of experience in the insurance industry. A large part of my career has been in the claims department at American Family Insurance. During my time in claims, I saw many cases where people did not understand their coverage or had inadequate coverage. Simply having insurance does not mean you are “protected” This experience inspired me to start the Lisa Williams Agency with American Family Insurance, providing top-notch customer service as my focus to ensure every customer leaves with the knowledge and confidence to protect what matters most to them.

These days, the insurance industry is going through a lot of changes, resulting in increased rates and stricter underwriting guidelines. Understanding your insurance coverage is

crucial because it directly impacts your financial security and peace of mind. By knowing exactly what your policy covers and excludes, you can make informed decisions about your protection. Misunderstanding or overlooking coverage details can lead to unexpected costs, gaps in protection, or denied claims when you need them most. In addition to customizing your policy with the right coverage and discounts- it is important to know that other factors can also affect your insurance:

Auto Insurance Costs:

- Higher repair and replacement costs: Additional sensors, cameras, and other features also come with higher repair and replacement costs.
- More severe accidents: Riskier driving behaviors, including speeding, distracted driving, and impaired driving, may lead to more severe accidents with high medical payments.
- Expensive medical care: Over the last five years, the increase in the cost of medical and hospital services has outpaced the rate of overall inflation.

Homeowners Insurance Costs:

- Cost of materials: As the cost of building materials changes due to supply and demand, the amount of coverage you need may also increase, impacting the overall cost of your insurance.
- Cost of labor: If you need to rebuild your home, it's not just the materials that influence cost – labor is a significant component as well.

With an office located in the Lowry neighborhood in Denver the Lisa Williams Agency is all about delivering excellent customer service and industry expertise. We aim to build lasting relationships based on trust, integrity, and personalized attention. When you choose us, you are selecting a team of dedicated professionals committed to meeting your needs. We believe insurance is more than just a transaction; it's a

promise to safeguard what's important to you, whether it's your home, auto, business, or life.

Now more than ever, it is essential to work with a trusted insurance provider who can help you navigate the complexities of insurance and ensure that you have the right coverage for your unique circumstances. Contact us today to create an insurance plan tailored to your specific goals and aspirations. Let us work with you to protect your dreams and secure your future. Your peace of mind is our priority, and we're here to offer you the highest level of service and support every step of the way. Trust the Lisa Williams Agency to safeguard what matters most to you.



Image: Adobe



Image: Adobe.

Black Business ON THE MOVE



Photo: A Touch of Dawn

A Touch of Dawn

By DAWN WOODS-SAPP

Since 2013, Dawn Woods-Sapp has been on a mission to run her on business as an independent massage therapist, and as owner of At A Touch of Dawn LLC, she has managed to reach her goal.

Dawn offers a therapeutic massage that provides the opportunity for people to live a pain-free life and perform at their highest ability. She strives to help relieve pain, increase energy and blood circulation.

Her signature massage techniques help eliminate:

- Migraines
- Joint Pain
- Stress and Anxiety
- Back Pain
- And much more.

Her Credentials stem from Medical Massage to relaxation therapeutic massage. She has studied at The Upledger Institute, Inc in 2020 to get certified in Craniosacral Therapy. She trained at Denver School of Massage Therapy where she became Licensed and Insured in the Professional Massage Therapy Program

Dawn also has a Business Marketing Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Phoenix which has been instrumental in helping her brand and market her company.

She has performed several massage on variety of clients that includes:

- Community Events
- Corporate Events
- Hand & Stone Day Spa
- Spavia-Day Spa
- Chiropractic Massage

Best Practice

- Cranial Sacral Therapy
- Sports Massage
- Structural Body Work
- Advanced Deep Swedish Massage
- Reflexology
- Swedish Massage

Dawn states, "We want to be part of your healthcare plan. Please allow us to help you renew your mind, relax your body!"

To learn more visit <http://atouchofdawn.com>



Photo: High Point Financial Group

High Point Financial Group, LLC

By DARRYL HUDSPETH

Darryl Hudspeth is a founding partner of High Point Financial Group, LLC, which started its business operation in March 2003. In 2023, Darryl was voted as a Top Advisor in the state of Colorado by Forbes (ranked #7). Additionally, he

is a qualifying and lifetime member of the global Million Dollar Round Table association.

At High Point Financial Group, LLC, we are a boutique financial advisory firm with 15 partners, and five offices throughout Colorado. We specialize in a diverse set of services such as Estate Planning, Business Planning, Investments, Retirement Planning, and Life Insurance. High Point Financial Group is dedicated to putting our clients first, understanding your unique needs and objectives, providing custom solutions with integrity, efficiency, and customer service excellence. What makes us unique is our team atmosphere, collective expertise, diverse resources, community involvement, long-term relationships and commitment.

High Point Financial Group, LLC is an active member of the local community. To highlight recent involvement, one of the organizations we proudly give back to is the Colorado State University John Mosley Mentorship Program, which is named after one of the original Tuskegee Airmen. This was the first of its kind NCAA recognized mentorship program for African American athletes. The mentorship provides guidance to the student athletes as they navigate the many complexities of excelling in collegiate academics, athletics, and managing daily responsibilities. In 2023, we gave back to another important cause by volunteering for the Special Olympics Colorado Plane Pull. We are always looking for new opportunities to serve our community and give back to organizations and those in need.

www.highpointgrp.com



Photo: Chacon's Construction & Transport

Chacon's Construction & Transport

By PATRICIA CHACON

[Chacon's Construction and Transport](#) is a small Latino family business formed in 2004. We provide construction materials transportation services in the public and private sectors. Including, but not limited to asphalt, wet concrete, demolition. We greatly appreciate the opportunity that organizations like CBCC and others provide to small businesses.

We started this adventure with effort and sacrifices with only a truck, without having experience or a legal status in this country at that time but with the hope of being able to have a better opportunity to support our family. Today we work hard on a day-by-day basis and we share the opportunity with others; behind us, many people are working hard to support their families. We lead a small group of subcontractors, but we want to grow and be part of the important projects in this great city of Denver. We have had the opportunity to work on CDOT and City of Denver projects, including Denver International Airport.

We highly value the effort of people with passion and commitment to helping small businesses that are the heart of the economy. We appreciate the vision they have to educate and provide tools, resources and education for us to take advantage of, to be able to grow, and have the satisfaction of participating through our work in the new constructions or remodelings that make the city more beautiful. One day we will have the satisfaction of telling the next generations that we were part of those infrastructure works in this place.

Black Business ON THE MOVE



Photos: Sistahbiz Global Network

Sistahbiz Global Network

By MAKISHA BOOTHE

At [Sistahbiz Global Network](#), our mission is to empower Black women entrepreneurs with the knowledge, tools, and community support needed to master their business numbers and craft effective business plans, ensuring sustainable success.

The Impact: The success of Sistahbiz is reflected in the growth and achievements of our members. We transform solopreneurs into job creators, elevate businesses from modest revenues to over \$250K, and change the course of lives. By turning under-resourced entrepreneurs into empowered business leaders, and replacing trial-and-error with strategic, data-driven planning, Sistahbiz is dismantling longstanding barriers and paving new paths to economic empowerment.

What We Offer: At Sistahbiz, our members have exclusive access to The Suite, a comprehensive online platform packed with a variety of tools:

- **Data Labs - KPI and Budget Labs:** Members participate in interactive labs where they can dive deep into understanding and mastering Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and effective budget management.
- **Funding Tracker:** This tool is a game-changer for identifying financial opportunities. It aids members in discovering and leveraging

various funding sources critical for business growth and sustainability.

- **Digital Library:** Our extensive digital library is stocked with a wealth of tools, templates, and courses.
- **Communities of Practice:** Covering various business strategies, these small group online forums are focused on key areas like profit boosting, revenue generation, and cost management. They offer a platform for collaborative learning and sharing of best practices.
- **Book Studies:** 5-week business book studies complete with detailed syllabi and group discussions. These sessions are designed to provide deeper insights and learning on critical business topics and theories.
- **Monthly Seminars - Lunch and Learns:** These seminars are an excellent opportunity for members to expand their knowledge on business design, leading with data and strategic planning practices.
- **Black Girl Therapy Sessions:** Focused on addressing money and racial trauma, these sessions offer a safe and supportive space for members to explore and heal from the unique challenges they face as Black women entrepreneur



Photo: The Hunter Group

The Hunter Group

By DALE HUNTER

The Hunter Group (THG) is a full-service government relation, external affairs consulting

firm with over 25 years of experience in the water and energy industry. Dale R. Hunter is the principal owner and founder of The Hunter Group based in Sacramento. His company provides strategic advice to corporations and statewide associations with regulatory and state policy issues in the State Capitol. As a Colorado native, Hunter will expand his 10-year-old company to Denver in spring of 2024.

Prior to starting his own company, the veteran strategist served as the State Government Relations Director for Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E). Under his leadership, PG&E successfully completed the largest groundwater clean-up project in the 106-year history of the San Francisco based utility. Hunter also served as the Chief Lobbyist and State Director, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. MWD is the largest water wholesaler in the country. At MWD, Hunter reorganized the state capitol operations and launched an aggressive campaign focused on collaboration, resulting in landmark state water legislation related to growth and land use. Hunter started his career in Los Angeles serving as the press liaison and field organizer for the President, Los Angeles City Council.

Some of his current and past THG clients include Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), Southern California Edison Company, West Basin Municipal Water District, California Department of Water Resources (Save Our Water Campaign), The City of Winters (Yolo County), Optimatics (Cloud based Engineering Solutions) and the California School Boards Association.

Hunter, in partnership with Gloria Gray, Former Chair, MWD Board of Directors created the California African American Water Education Foundation (CAAWEF), a statewide non-profit water education organization focused on the African American community in California.

Created in 2019, Hunter served as the first Executive Director for CAAWEF.

The former news reporter graduated with a Journalism Degree from the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley. He is a former CORO Fellow (Post Graduate Leadership Development Institute in Los Angeles) and completed the John F. Kennedy School of Government Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at Harvard University. He also completed the Executive Training Program "Managing Strategic Business initiatives in a Political Environment" at the University of Chicago, School of Business.

The Hunter Group
www.thg.consulting

Kristen Johnson, Executive Assistant
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C: (303) 946-5588

Share Your Story with Us!

Are you a Black business owner in Colorado making an impact? We're seeking submissions for our "Black Businesses on the Move" section! In 250-500 words, tell us what sets your business apart, your contributions to the community, and any challenges you've overcome. Please include relevant photos and/or bios to accompany your story.

Send your submissions to:
TheAcumen@cbcc.biz.

Let's celebrate your achievements and inspire our community together!

Editorial and Deadline Calendar

Featured Topic

Space Reservations

Materials Due

April 2024

Black Women's Month

Friday, March 15

Wednesday, March 20

May 2024

National Small Business Month

Monday, April 15

Friday, April 19

June 2024

Juneteenth

Wednesday, May 15

Monday, May 20

July 2024

International Day of Cooperatives

Friday, June 14

Tuesday, June 18

August 2024

National Black Business Month

Tuesday, July 16

Friday, July 19

September 2024

911 Memorial

Friday, August 16

Tuesday, August 20

October 2024

Health

Monday, September 16

Friday, September 20

November 2024

Youth Entrepreneurs

Tuesday, October 15

Friday, October 18

December 2024

National Write a Business Plan Month

Thursday, November 14

Monday, November 18

January 2025

A Salute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Friday, December 13

Wednesday, December 18

February 2025

Black History Month

Tuesday, January 14

Friday, January 17

March 2025

International Women's Day

Wednesday, February 14

Monday, February 19

Advertisements

Boost your business's visibility by advertising with the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce in **The Acumen**. Connect with a wide, engaged audience that supports local enterprises and gain unparalleled exposure within the community. Don't miss this opportunity - contact us today to place your ad and expand your reach!

Advertising Rates

Listed in cost per ad placement.

	1X	3X	6X	9X	12X
Full Page	\$1000.00	\$900.00	\$800.00	\$700.00	\$600.00
Junior Page	\$750.00	\$675.00	\$600.00	\$525.00	\$450.00
Half Page	\$500.00	\$450.00	\$400.00	\$350.00	\$300.00
Quarter Page	\$250.00	\$225.00	\$200.00	\$175.00	\$150.00
Eighth Page	\$125.00	\$112.50	\$100.00	\$87.50	\$75.00
Sixteenth Page	\$62.50	\$56.25	\$50.00	\$43.75	\$37.50

Advertisement Sizes

	Without Bleed (inches)	With Bleed (inches)
Full Page	8.500 w x 11.000 h	8.750 w x 11.250 h
Junior Page	5.000 w x 7.750 h	5.250 w x 8.000 h
Half Page - Horizontal	7.500 w x 4.875 h	7.750 w x 5.125 h
Half Page - Vertical	3.625 w x 10.000 h	3.875 w x 10.250 h
Quarter Page - Horizontal	4.875 w x 3.625 h	5.125 w x 3.875 h
Quarter Page - Vertical	3.625 w x 4.875 h	3.875 w x 5.125 h
Eighth Page (business card) - Horizontal	3.500 w x 2.000 h	3.750 w x 2.250 h
Eighth Page (business card) - Vertical	2.000 w x 3.500 h	2.250 w x 3.750 h
Sixteenth Page	1.750 w x 2.375 h	2.000 w x 2.625 h

To purchase advertising space, or to request more information, please contact TheAcumen@cbcc.biz.



ATTENTION ALL CBCC MEMBERS!

Want to share your story with fellow members?
Submit an article about your business or industry to be included in **THE ACUMEN**, a Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce monthly publication.

Are you a member of the Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce?

The CBCC is a thriving business community that is driving success for Black-owned business. We create programs and services for business assistance and support; we connect Black-owned businesses with each other for networking and visibility; and we collaborate with corporate partners and other organizations to support the community as a whole. The Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce is the voice of Black business owners and an advocate for resources and policies that impact us.

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.

Join today and be part of a network that drives growth and innovation!

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