



2024 DC SMALL
BUSINESS SUMMIT
AND EXPO



Walter E. Washington Convention Center

801 Allen Y. Lew Place NW
Washington, DC 20001

Tuesday, April 30th, 2024
8:00am - 3:00pm

HOST PARTNERS



greater**washington**
hispanic chamber of commerce





2024 DC SMALL BUSINESS SUMMIT AND EXPO



MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR

Welcome to Washington, DC's celebration of National Small Business Week. Nothing is more important to the success of DC than a thriving business community. PowerUp for Success: DC Small Business Summit and Expo is designed to give small businesses the tools and strategies they need to start, grow, and prosper.

This year's event has a special impact with the "power of partnership" of DC Health Link, the DC Chamber of Commerce, the DC Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking, the DC Department of Small and Local Business Development, the Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington, and the professional business organizations and agencies that comprise the DC Health Link Small Business Braintrust. These departments and organizations have joined forces to deliver resources and expertise to DC small business owners.

Participants in the summit will learn about AI applications, green energy solutions, how to access capital and procurement prospects, as well as implement strategies for success in challenging times. Workshops include new businesses and startups, established businesses, non-profit, community and faith-based organizations, as well as women owned businesses, youth entrepreneurs, and retailers. I encourage attendees to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge, advice, skills, and resources from our business experts and to make the most of the many networking opportunities and connections with which to start mutually beneficial relationships. Once again, welcome! I am #DCProud to stand with our small business community and am pleased to commend the POWERUP For Success: DC Small Business Summit and Expo partners for joining forces to produce an event of this caliber. Success for small businesses is success for all of DC.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Muriel Bowser".

Muriel Bowser
Mayor, Washington, DC



Good morning, Attendees,

Thank you for joining POWERUP For Success: 2024 DC Small Business Summit and Expo, in celebration of National Small Business Week, as we recognize the invaluable contributions small businesses make each day to our nation. Just as small businesses are critical to the national economy, they too are important to the local economy. DC small businesses are the economic engine that fuels our city and serve as the backbone and heart of our vibrant community.

POWERUP For Success is a power-packed day of opportunities to learn, share and gain access to important information, tools, and strategies to impact the growth of your business. Whether you are just starting out in business or have already been in business, there is something here for you.

Today's agenda includes an exciting list of speakers with expert advice and innovative research around AI and green energy to help businesses to better understand the dynamics of the evolving business world. We are honored to have U.S. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, our warrior on the Hill, and Neera Tanden, Domestic Policy Advisor to President Biden and former Senior Advisor and Staff Secretary in the White House to kick-start the day. Cutting-edge workshops will feature access to capital, both traditional and non-traditional funding resources, as well as local and federal contracts and procurement opportunities. In addition, attendees will receive valuable information to sustain a business from one-on-one speed networking, digital media and marketing to professional business coaching and other strategies for success and business progress.

In previous years, each of the host partners, DC Health Link, DC Chamber of Commerce (DCCC), District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities & Banking (DISB), and the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) held separate small business events during National Small Business Week. This year the host agencies joined forces to produce one major collaborative event. With the added support of the Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GWHCC), the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington (RAMW) and the DC Health Link Small Business Braintrust partners, comprised of federal and local government agencies, and professional business organizations, the power of the partnership birthed POWERUP For Success: 2024 DC Small Business Summit and Expo.

We hope you will find this event helpful in moving you closer to your business goals and dreams. Enjoy the day and thank you for attending POWERUP for Success 2024.

Sincerely,



Mila Kofman
 Executive Director
 DC Health Link



Angela Franco
 President/CEO
 DCCC



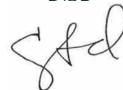
Karima Woods
 Commissioner
 DISB



Rosemary Suggs-Evans
 Director
 DSLBD



Nicole Quiroga
 President & CEO
 GWHCC



Shawn Townsend
 President & CEO
 RAMW

AGENDA

8:00 am

Open All Day

- Speed Networking
- Makers Market & Business Networking

8:45 am – 9:30 am

OPENING PLENARY

Room 146ABC

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Dr. Linda Wharton Boyd

Chief Communications, External Affairs
and Strategic Partnerships Officer

DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority

“America the Beautiful”

Brian Lenair

Renown Saxophone Phenomenon

Greetings

Diane Lewis, Chair

DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority Board

Tonya Kinlow, Chair

DC Chamber of Commerce

Remarks

Eleanor Holmes Norton, US Congresswoman

The District of Columbia

Greetings “The Power of Partnership”

Rosemary Suggs-Evans, Director

DSLBD

Angela Franco, CEO

DCCC

Mila Kofman, Executive Director

DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority (DCHBX)

Karima Woods, Commissioner

DISB

Greeting from DC Health Link

Small Business Braintrust

Larry G. Webb

District Director, U.S. Small Business Administration

Washington Metropolitan Area District Office

AGENDA

Keynote Address

Neera Tanden

Domestic Policy Advisor to President Biden and former Senior Advisor and Staff Secretary

White House

From Our Sponsors

Patrick Phillippi, Senior Manager-Community Engagement

Amazon

Mario Acosta-Vélez, VP of Local Engagement, Corporate Social Responsibility Public Policy

Verizon East Region

Acknowledgements Closing Remarks

10:00 am – 11:00 am GENERAL SESSION

Room 146ABC

Gain vital insights on how artificial intelligence is reshaping the business world and financial sector, specifically tailored for small businesses. Explore actionable methods for improving efficiency, elevating customer service, and fortifying security within your operations using AI.

Moderator: Sybongile Cook, Director of Business Development & Strategy, Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development (DMPED)

- Bill Gibbs, Engineer 3, Comcast Business
- Helen Xing, Head of Data and AI Partner GTM, Amazon Web Services
- Yohannes Tafesse, Founder and CEO, Gratitude Systems
- Zack Schwartz, Chief Information & Technology Officer, Events DC
- Tamara Zeidan, Director, DISB

11:00 am-12:00 pm WORKSHOP TRACKS

TRACK A

New and Emerging Business

Room 144A

Unlock the potential of new and emerging businesses with expert guidance, practical advice, and valuable insights shared by the panel of seasoned entrepreneurs and industry experts.

Moderator: Tiffany Crowe, Director,
Department of Licensing and Consumer
Protection (DLCP)

- Carl Brown, State/Executive Director,
District of Columbia Small Business
Development Center (DCSBDC)
- Garry Johnson, Founder & Managing
Partner, Bison Venture Capital
- Keith Howard, Manager of the Business
Operations, DSLBD
- Sharon R. Pinder, President & CEO,
Capital Region Minority Supplier
Development Council (MSDC)
- Maria Severichs, AVP; Small Business
Banker, Bank of America

Track B

Established and in Growth

Room 144C

Explore the potential, challenges, and strategies of new and emerging growth ventures through insightful discussions and shared experiences

Moderator: Ronnette Meyers, President and
CEO, JLAN Solutions

- Kelvin D. Jeter, Jr, President and CEO,
Krendall Orren Business Solutions, Inc.
- David Hincapie, Lender Relations
Specialist, Veteran Business
Development Officer Washington
Metropolitan Area District Office, SBA

AGENDA

- Jeff Miskiri, Miskiri Hospitality Group
- Aaron Fenwick, SSBCI Program Administrator, Department of Insurance, Securities, & Banking (DISB)
- Melissa Resil, Program Manager, Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD).
- Andrés O. Hayes, Founder and President and CEO, Airtifae Group

Track C

Women in Business

Room 144B

Join an inspiring discussion featuring successful women entrepreneurs, leaders, and innovators sharing their insights, strategies, and stories of empowerment in the world of business.

Moderator: Angela Dingle, Founder,
Ex-Nihilo Management/WIPP

- Leandra Joseph, Chief Operating Officer, WBENC DC & NY
- Lanta Evans-Motte, Financial Advisor, Raymond James Financial Services
- Marisela Rodela, Program Director-EWOC Center, Wacif
- Cary Hatch, Senior Counsel, HART
- Amanda Stevens, President & CEO, The Fresh Food Factory

Track D

Non-Profit and Faith-Based Leaders

Room 143C

Elevating non-profit and faith-based leaders with the tools, resources, and support to make a lasting impact in their communities and beyond.

Moderator: Claude Johnson, Executive Director, The Black Fives Foundation,

- Tim Kime, Kime Leadership Associates

- Stephanie Campbell, Chief Operating Officer, Congress Heights Community Training & Development Corp
- Vida Ali, Ben's Chili Bowl Foundation

Track E

Youth and Young Adult Entrepreneurs

Room 143B

Empowering youth and young adult entrepreneurs to unleash their potential; Innovate, and drive positive change in the world of business.

Moderator: Johnny Bailey, Founder & Coach, Shine Hard Network

11:15 am-12:15 pm

- Gabby Loftin, Fashion Designer and Author, Gabby World Design
- Mohamed Jalloh, Founder, Jaliyaa Coffee
- Tacharna Crump, Founder & Executive Director, Youth Entrepreneur Institute

Track F

Retailers

Room: 146 ABC

Empowering retailers with innovative solutions and strategic insights to thrive in today's competitive market landscape.

Moderator: Sybongile Cook, Director of Business Development & Strategy, Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development (DMPED)

- Gabriel Lemos, Executive Director, LINK Strategic Partners
- Angel Gregorio, Founder, The Spice Suite LLC
- Keisha Mims, Director, Small Business Resource Center and Outreach (DLCP)
- Amanda Preske, Founder, Because Science
- April Richardarson, Co-Owner, Baked in Baltimore, and DC Sweet Potato Cake

AGENDA

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS LUNCHEON

Room 147AB

Musical Selection

Brian Lenair, Saxophonist

Opening Remarks

Jacquay Henderson & Ryan Chaffo

Co-Chairs

Small Business Advisory Council

Welcome Remarks

Phil Mendelson

Chairman

Council of District of Columbia

Invocation & Blessings

Rev. Thomas L. Bowen

Earl L. Harrison Minister of Social Justice

Shiloh Baptist Church

LUNCH SERVED

Introduction of Councilmember

Kenyan R. McDuffie

Angela Franco, Pres & CEO

DC Chamber of Commerce

Greetings and Special Remarks

Kenyan R. McDuffie

DC Councilmember At-Large

Introduction of Keynote Speaker

Maria Severichs, Small Business Banker,

Assistant Vice President

Bank of America

Keynote Speaker

“Alice Lives Here” (Video)

Rosia Allen Herring

President & Chief Executive Officer of United Way

National Capital Area (United Way NCA) and

International Expert on Public and Private

Partnerships, Philanthropy and Business Strategy

Introduction of Speaker Brian McLaughlin

Angela Franco

DC Chamber of Commerce

Green Energy Opportunities

Brian McLaughlin, CEO

PlanitWorks

AWARDS CEREMONY

Intro to the Awards Ceremony

Angela Franco, Pres & CEO

DC Chamber of Commerce

Retailer of the Year Award

- Presenter - Rosemary Suggs-Evans, Director, DSLBD
- Awardee - Flowers by Alexes
Alexes Haggins, Owner

Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) of the Year Award

- Presenter - Rosemary Suggs-Evans, Director, DSLBD
- Awardee - Capital City Restaurant Group, LLC DBA MLK Deli/Deanwood Deli
Tyrone White, Owner

Small Business of the Year Award

- Presenter – Karima Woods, Commissioner, DC Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB)
- Awardee - Calpro Group
Socrates y Ramon Cala, Co-Director

Small Businessperson of the Year Award

- Presenter - Mario Acosta-Velez, Vice President of Local Engagement, Corporate Social Responsibility and Public Policy for Verizon East Region
- Awardee - Kelvin Jeter, President & CEO, Krendall Orren Business Solutions, Inc

AGENDA

Non-Profit Small Business of the Year

- Presenter – Brian Hanlon, Director DC Department of Buildings
- Awardee – ACEE The Firm Foundation Gwyneth Brown, Founder

Small Business Champion of the Year Award

- Presenter - Tonya Kinlow, Board Chair, DC Chamber of Commerce
- Awardee - Bank of America Danny Aberra, VP Global Commercial Business Banking

Women in Business Champion Award

- Presenter – Stacy Richardson Burnette, Esq., Senior Director. Government & Regulatory Affairs, Comcast Cable
- Awardee – Aimee D. Griffin, Esq. Principal, The Griffin Firm, LLM, Principal Aimee Griffin

Young Entrepreneur of the Year

- Presenter – Juan Jara, Immediate Past Board Chair, Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Awardee - Gabby's World Design Gabrielle Lofton

Acknowledgments and Closing Remarks

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTING

Room 145AB

MAKERS MARKET - LAST CALL!

Room 146ABC

SMALL BUSINESS AWARDEES

Small Business of the Year Award



Socrates y Ramon Cala
Co-Director
The CALPRO Group (TCG)

Son of two visionary immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Socrates strives every day to make a positive impact in the Washington DC Area. Socrates began his professional journey and ambitions over 35 years ago in the field of Hospitality/Meeting planning, in Rochester, New York, where he managed and lead an award-winning facility – The Rochester Riverside Convention Center. This experience afforded him an opportunity to come to Washington DC and join the Operations team of the Washington DC Convention Center. After managing and executing several large-scale trade shows held at the new facility, Socrates join his families Meeting Planning & Conference Management company The CALPRO Group (TCG).

Small Businessperson of the Year Award



Kelvin D. Jeter
President and CEO
Krendall Orren Business Solutions, Inc.

Kelvin D. Jeter, Jr. is President and CEO of Krendall Orren Business Solutions, Inc., where he has provided the company with its strategic vision for execution and growth, since founding the organization in 2007. Kelvin takes great pride in leading Krendall Orren Business Solutions in providing contacts, procurement, training and strategic management support to Federal agencies and organizations. Kelvin completed his undergraduate studies at James Madison University and has both a MS in Management and an MBA from the University of Maryland.

SMALL BUSINESS AWARDEES

Small Business Non-Profit Business of the Year



Gwyneth Brown

Founder and CEO

Acee The Firm Foundation

Gwyneth Brown is an accomplished author, Certified Life Coach, and a dynamic Director and Writer, renowned for her compelling work in “Love: The Reprogram,” a captivating live stage play. Alongside her husband of 8 years, Jermaine Brown, an author and COO, she is the Founder and CEO of Acee The Firm Foundation, a women’s empowerment and community enrichment organization based in their hometown of Washington, DC. Gwyneth’s journey began with academic excellence, graduating in the top ten of her class from Ballou Senior High School and earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree with honors from Cheyney University, Pennsylvania.

Small Business Champion of the Year Award

Bank of America



Women in Business Champion Award



Aimee Griffin
Attorney
The Griffin Firm PLLC

Attorney Aimee Griffin is a business and estate planning attorney admitted to practice in Massachusetts, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. She was recognized by the Small Business Administration as a Massachusetts and New England Small Business Champion through the development of the New England Black Chambers and the US Black Chambers. Aimee is the principal attorney of Life & Legacy Counselors of The Griffin Firm PLLC and founder of the nonprofit the Association of Black Estate Planning Professionals. An adjunct professor at the Western New England University, School of Law, Aimee is a monthly contributor to the Washington Informer Newspaper.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year



Gabrielle (Gabby) Loftin
CEO/Founder: Gabby's World Designs
Author: Abby YoYo book series

Gabrielle (Gabby) Loftin is DC's youngest celebrity fashion designer and author. She is also a creator of animated shorts, a digital artist, rug maker, athlete, actress and 4.0 scholar. Gabby has been featured in NY Fashion Week, LA Fashion Week, Atlantic City Fashion Week, and invited to be featured in Dubai, London, Hawaii, and Milan fashion weeks. She uses her sewing and creativity to give back to her community.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Neera Tanden

Domestic Policy Advisor to President Biden
The White House

Neera Tanden currently serves as Domestic Policy Advisor to President Biden. Previously, she was Senior Advisor and Staff Secretary in the White House. She has served in both the Obama and Clinton administrations, as well as presidential campaigns and think tanks. Prior to her roles in the Biden-Harris Administration, Neera was the President and CEO of the Center for American Progress and the Center for American Progress Action Fund, one of the largest think tanks in the country, with teams across all components of domestic policy including crime, education, immigration, health care, civil rights, and more.

Neera previously served as senior advisor for health reform at the Department of Health and Human Services, working on President Barack Obama's health reform team in the White House. Prior to that, she was the director of domestic policy for the Obama-Biden presidential campaign, where she managed all domestic policy proposals. Neera also served as policy director for the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign. She received her BS from UCLA and her JD from Yale Law School.



Rosie Allen-Herring

President and Chief Executive Officer
United Way National Capital Area

Rosie Allen-Herring has more than 30 years of experience and is an international expert in the areas of corporate finance, strategic leadership, public and private partnerships, corporate philanthropy, and business strategy. She currently serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of the National Capital Area where she leads the team in its work to reduce disparities in the areas of health, education and economic opportunity.

For nearly 21 years, Rosie brought her business acumen to Fannie Mae by serving in various executive roles. Rosie holds key board leadership positions and memberships with several business and civic organizations, including MedStar Health, Inc., Greater Washington Partnership, Greater Washington Board of Trade, WesBanco (NASDAQ), United Way Worldwide, Economic Club of Washington, Urban Institute, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. Rosie earned an M.B.A. from Strayer University and a B.A. in Economics from Howard University.

SPECIAL GUESTS



Eleanor Holmes Norton

Congresswoman
District of Columbia

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, serving as congresswoman for the District of Columbia since 1991, is the Chair of the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. She serves on two committees: the Committee on Oversight and Reform and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Before her congressional service, President Jimmy Carter appointed her to serve as the first woman to chair the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She came to Congress as a national figure who had been a civil rights and feminist leader, tenured professor of law, and board member at three Fortune 500 companies. Congresswoman Norton has been named one of the 100 most important American women in one survey and one of the most powerful women in Washington in another. The Congresswoman's work for full congressional voting representation and for full democracy for the people of the District of Columbia continues her lifelong struggle for universal human and civil rights.



Thomas L. Bowen

Earl L. Harrison Minister of Social Justice
Shiloh Baptist Church

Rev. Thomas L. Bowen is a Senior Advisor for Public Engagement where he leads the White House's faith engagement. Previously, he served as the Director of African American Strategic Engagement in the Executive Office of DC Mayor Muriel Bowser and held dual roles as the Director of both the Mayor's Office on African American Affairs and the Mayor's Office of Religious Affairs, earning him the title of "DC's Pastor." An ordained Baptist minister, Rev. Bowen is the Earl L. Harrison Minister of Social Justice at Shiloh Baptist Church (Washington, DC) where he has dedicated his service since 2002. His extensive experience includes pivotal roles such as Senior Religious Advocate for the Children's Defense Fund and Senior Field Organizer for its Black Community Crusade for Children. Rev. Bowen is a graduate of Morehouse College where he was a Ford Foundation Scholar and served as President of the NAACP. He studied for the ministry at The Divinity School, University of Chicago. Originating from Lorain County, Ohio, Rev. Bowen has embraced Washington, DC, as his home for over two decades, currently residing in the historic Trinidad neighborhood in Northeast.

SPECIAL GUESTS



Kenyan McDuffie
Councilmember
Council of the District of Columbia

His an experienced attorney, civil rights advocate, and community leader dedicated to improving the lives of District residents, Kenyan R. McDuffie, was first elected in a 2012 special election to represent Ward 5 on the Council of the District of Columbia. In November 2014, Ward 5 voters overwhelmingly re-elected him to serve a full four-year term. Councilmember McDuffie was again re-elected in 2018. In 2022, District residents, in all 8 Wards, elected him to serve as Councilmember At-Large.



Brian McLaughlin
CEO and Co-founder
PlanitWorks

Brian McLaughlin is a seasoned leader with more than 26 years of professional experience stretching across the non-profit, public and for-profit sectors. McLaughlin has served as the CEO or highest-level executive officer at five separate companies. McLaughlin is the CEO and co-founder of PlanitWorks, an end-to-end energy solutions development company specializing in sustainable housing and renewable energy projects on Tribal lands and in economically disadvantaged communities. McLaughlin is a graduate of Duke University and holds a Master's degree in City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Master's degree in Economics from American University.



Brian Lenair
Guest Artist

Brian Lenair is Washington, DC's own saxophone phenomenon. He is a musically gifted sax player who treats the saxophone as an extension of himself. His love of music began at the age of eight with his most profound influence, his Dad, who is also a talented saxophonist. His creativity with the sax astonished audiences when he plays two saxes simultaneously. Every breath he takes and every note he plays is to the glory of God!

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Angela Dingle
President and CEO
Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP)

As President and CEO of Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP), Angela Dingle leads a national nonpartisan organization advocating on behalf of women entrepreneurs, strengthening their impact on our nation's public policy, creating economic opportunities, and forging alliances with other business organizations.



Aaron Fenwick
SSBCI Program Administrator, Banking Bureau
DC Insurance, Securities & Banking (DISB)

Aaron Fenwick manages the District of Columbia's access to small business capital program which is housed at the Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking. In this role, Mr. Fenwick oversees the DC BizCAP program where he assists entrepreneurs and small business owners to access capital through partnerships with commercial lending institutions.



Angela Franco
President & CEO
DC Chamber of Commerce

Prior to joining the DC Chamber of Commerce, Angela Franco was the Senior Advisor for Business Development at the DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority (DCHBX) where she was responsible for collaborating with the Hispanic and business communities as well as local and Federal Government.



Angel Gregorio
Founder and Owner
The Spice Suite

Angel Gregorio is the founder and owner of The Spice Suite, a growing community-centric spice boutique, located in the Washington, DC's Langdon Park community. She created The Spice Suite to offer patrons unique, interactive culinary experiences through fresh spice blends and cooking oils from around the world.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Andrés O. Hayes

Founder and President and CEO
Airtifae Group

Andrés O. Hayes is Founder and President and CEO of the Airtifae Group, he has been instrumental in elevating the international presence and service of local, regional, and international entities. From 2019 to 2022, Hayes served as the Director for International Trade and Commerce in the Government of the District of Columbia, where he attracted foreign direct investment, strengthened relationships with investing countries, and boosted exports from SMEs. As the visionary force behind Airtifae Global Services,, based in Washington, DC, and Abu Dhabi, he forges strategic relationships to attract foreign investment and develop standardized training programs for the hospitality industry. Andrés O. Hayes's journey as a leader, innovator, and community advocate continues to shape the landscape of international trade, hospitality, and entrepreneurship.



Amanda Preske

On track to be a research scientist, but in the constant pursuit of entrepreneurial success, Amanda finally found a way to combine it all: Because Science. As Washington, D.C.'s woman-owned science gift shop, Because Science serves Adams Morgan with science gifts, many of which are handmade on-site, and experiential activities centered around the fusion of science + art.



Amanda Stephenson

AGOA Advisor and Owner
Fresh Food Factory

AGOA Advisor and Owner of Fresh Food Factory a locally grown, healthy ethnic eatery. MBA in Business Management.

Amanda Stephenson serves the DMV, addressing disparities in health, food, housing, and income. She was a community health innovator in residence at Sibley Memorial Hospital during the 2nd cohort of Ward Infinity. Also, she was an innovator spotlighted at the 2019 Chesapeake Bay Food Summit. She owns The Fresh Food Factory Market, which was featured on CNN and CNBC.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Bill Gibbs

Sales Engineer
Comcast

With more than two decades of experience, Bill is a true jack of all trades when it comes to technology. He has held a variety of roles ranging from technical support to growing a wireless Internet Service Provider from a single transmission site to a multi-site network where he helped provide service to underserved communities, and has helped deploy several containerized data centers. Following a stint helping credit unions manage their disaster recovery efforts, Bill joined Comcast as a sales engineer. Presently, he is focused on helping businesses of all sizes find solutions to help their businesses grow safely and securely.



Carl Brown

State/Executive Director
District of Columbia Small Business Development Center
(DCSBDC)

Carl Brown is the State/Executive Director of the District of Columbia Small Business Development Center (DCSBDC) on the prestigious campus of Howard University. He has a wealth of small business development knowledge with over 25 years of experience. His subject matter expertise is in the following areas: human resources, sales, marketing, procurement, and government contracting. His public sector experience includes Federal, state, and local government where he was a warranted contract officer. He holds a BA from Howard University and an MGA from University of Maryland University College.



Cary Hatch

Senior Counsel

Cary Hatch is a recognized business and thought-leader, who bought and built a successful full-service advertising and marketing communications firm. Cary recently sold her agency, MDB Communications. She will continue her work as a brand advocate and share her experience and expertise as senior counsel, management consultant and corporate board member. Cary has been recognized on the POWER 100, the Washington Business Journal's list of the most influential business leaders, for 5 years. She currently serves as the Chair for the Mid-Atlantic Board of Governors for the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's) and serves on the 4A's National Government Relations Committee.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



David Hincapie

Economic Development Specialist
U.S. Small Business Administration

David Hincapie is an Economic Development Specialist with SBA Washington Metropolitan Area District Office. He has been with the District office and in the DC market for four years. Prior to his current position, David worked in the nonprofit sector. He is an Army Veteran and is committed to supporting small businesses.



Claude Johnson

Author, Historian, and Founder
Black Fives Foundation

Claude Johnson is an award-winning author, historian, and founder of the Black Fives Foundation, whose mission is to research, preserve, showcase, teach, and honor the pre-NBA history of African-American basketball teams.

Claude's narrative nonfiction book, "The Black Fives: The Epic Story of Basketball's Forgotten Era" (Abrams Press, 2022) won an MAAH Stone Book Award "Finalist" prize in recognition of exceptional new literary work. Claude has a BS in civil engineering and economics from Carnegie Mellon and an MS in mechanical engineering from Stanford.



Diane C. Lewis

Chair
DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority Board

Diane C. Lewis, MPA Diane is Co-Principal and Executive Vice President for ALTA Consulting Group. She offers expertise in the areas of community development and health care systems. Ms. Lewis served as Project Director for the design and development of integrated health system models in Washington, D.C. and Kansas City, Missouri. Ms. Lewis' work also includes the development of community-based health care provider networks in managed care environments.

Ms. Lewis holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from City College of New York and a Master's in Public Affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Garry Johnson III

Founder & Managing Partner
Bison Venture Partners

Garry Johnson III is an award winning entrepreneur, nationally recognized ecosystem builder, author, and educator working to build a more inclusive and equitable innovation economy. He's been recognized as a Delaware Business Times 40 Under 40 honoree, HBCU.vc & Hen Hatch Pitch Competition Winner, StartupAfrica Youth Entrepreneur of the Year, Siegfried Award Recipient, in addition to receiving many other accolades. Garry serves as Founder & Managing Partner at Bison Venture Partners, a firm on a mission to empower a new generation of small business owners and angel investors.



Helen Xing

Head of Data and AI Partner GTM
AWS for Americas

Helen Xing is an unstoppable force at the intersection of education, technology, and social impact. With expertise in business development, strategic alliances, and partner sales, she propels companies towards their revenue targets. Currently, she leads Data and AI Partner GTM at AWS for Americas. Helen started her journey at Merck, followed by 15-year tenure at Oracle, culminating as Senior Director of Partner Solutions in NA Sales. At Tableau, she pioneered the Government & Education partner ecosystem. Beyond business, Helen is at the forefront of Data for Good, fostering public-private partnerships to support veterans, champion diversity, equity, inclusion, and social welfare. Helen serves as the Chairwoman of the board of Nelly Berman Classical Musical Institute, and holds an MBA degree from the Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania.



Jeff Miskiri

Board of Directors
Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington

Chef Jeff was raised in Takoma Park, MD, and attended Blair High School. He began cooking at the age of 8 and by 17 he worked at McDonald's. He also worked at his family's Caribbean restaurant where he received an introduction to becoming a restaurateur. He committed to launching a restaurant in Washington, DC to honor his family's roots. In 2012, he opened Po Boy Jim. He furthered this vision in 2020 by launching Creole on 14th and then again in 2021 by launching Suga & Spice. Most recently, Chef Jeff was appointed to the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington Board of Directors.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Keisha Mims

Director

Outreach and Engagement for the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection

Keisha Mims is a trusted leader who passionately serve others and create positive, sustainable social change. In her current role as Director of Outreach and Engagement for the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection, she is over the Ward based account managers and the Business Resource Center (formerly the Small Business Resource Center). She joined the Bowser administration in early 2016, serving as the Ward 8 Community Relations Liaison (MOCRS). She received her BS in Sports and Recreational Management from Temple University, her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Arkansas, and is licensed to practice law in Maryland and DC.



Karima Woods

Commissioner

DC Insurance, Securities & Banking (DISB)

As Commissioner of the DISB, Karima Woods is responsible for cultivating a regulatory environment that protects consumers and attracts and retains financial services firms to the District, empowering and educating residents on financial matters and providing financing for small businesses.



Keith Howard

Founder & Managing Partner

DC Department of Small and Local Business Development

Keith Howard is an experienced business and procurement professional with 20 years of experience and expertise. Keith joined the DC Department of Small and Local Business Development in 2019 as a Certification Specialist, where he learned the Certified Business Enterprise law and spend requirements. The education gathered in Certification and his experience as a former small business owner propelled Keith to the Procurement Technical Assistance Center.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Lanta Evans-Motte

Investment Executive/Financial Advisor
Raymond James Financial Services

Ms. Lanta Evans-Motte is an entrepreneur with more than 3 decades of professional experience working with for-profit, non-profit, and faith-based organizations. Ms. Evans-Motte has worked with Fortune 500 corporations, including Verizon/Bell Atlantic, Hewlett Packard, 3Com Corporation, Morgan Stanley, and Raymond James. She has worked as a Financial Analyst, Financial Operations Manager, Supply Chain Consultant, E-Commerce Consultant, Investment Executive, Financial Advisor, & Financial Planner.



Larry G. Webb

District Director
SBA-Washington Metropolitan Area District Office

Larry G. Webb serves as District Director for the Washington Metropolitan Area District Office (WMADO) of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). He leads a team that supports small businesses throughout the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and Suburban Maryland. Webb joined the SBA as Senior Legal Counsel in 2011. His most recent position was lead attorney for SBA's Outreach and Marketing Team, during which he oversaw public-private partnerships, gifts to the Agency, memoranda of understanding, branding, social media and marketing. Webb holds a Juris Doctorate from Case Western Reserve University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and political science from Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri.



Leandra Joseph

Chief Operating Officer
WBEC Metro NY and Greater DMV

As Chief Operating Officer of WBEC Metro NY and Greater DMV, Leandra Joseph directs and oversees the administration and operations fostering a sense of teamwork and collaboration in the effort to increase business opportunities for Women's Business Enterprises (WB

Originally from the Commonwealth of Dominica, Leandra has a BS in Mathematics from SUNY Plattsburgh and a BS in Electrical Engineering Technology from DeVry University. Before joining WBEC Metro NY and Greater DMV, Leandra helped raise awareness about the need for medical insurance to cover wigs for medically related hair loss.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Linda Wharton Boyd, PhD

Chief Communications, External Affairs
and Strategic Partnerships Officer
DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority

Dr. Wharton Boyd joined the DCHBX senior management team in 2013 after having served on the Health Reform Implementation Committee which supported the establishment of the ACA online-marketplace in DC. She served in several executive level positions in DC government including the Executive Office of Mayors Vincent C. Gray, Anthony Williams and Marion Barry.



Marisela Rodela

Program Director
Enterprising Women of Color DMV Business Center (EWOC)

Marisela Rodela is the Program Director for the Enterprising Women of Color DMV Business Center (EWOC) at the Washington Area Community Investment Fund (Wacif). The EWOC Center fosters and supports a small business ecosystem for women of color in the DMV through robust business services that are dedicated to supporting the growth and resiliency of our clients. Marisela earned both a MSW degree and a MPH degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She also received a BA degree in Social Psychology & Philosophy from Trinity University.



Maria Severichs

AVP; Small Business Banker
Bank of America

Maria has been in the financial banking business with Bank of America for more than 14 years and has held progressively advanced positions since her start in 2010. She has served as a Financial Center Operation Manager, Financial Center Manager and currently as Assistant Vice President & Small Business Banker in Baltimore-Washington region.



Mila Kofman

Executive Director
DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority

Mila Kofman is a nationally recognized expert on private health insurance markets and regulation including the ACA, HIPAA, and ERISA. She has a record of successfully implementing federal and state health insurance reforms and building, revamping, and leading organizations.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Melissa Resil

Business Certification Manager (CBE)
District of Columbia's Department of Small
and Local Business Development (DSLBD)

Melissa Resil joined the District of Columbia's Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) in 2011 as the Business Certification Manager for the Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) program. She has oversight and management of all requests submitted to her division related to the CBE program. In her role, she manages an inventory of over 2000 active certified businesses. Recently, her team's work directly contributed to the District's record-breaking success in spending over \$1.2 billion with CBEs. She is a graduate of Wheaton College with a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Hispanic Studies.



Mohamed Jalloh

Founder/Storyteller
Jaliyaa Coffee

Mohamed Jalloh, at the heart of Jaliyaa Coffee and the Jaliyaa Project, champions the timeless art of storytelling to build bridges between diverse cultures. His approach elevates storytelling as the essence of his work, transcending the mere act of serving coffee or implementing projects. Through Jaliyaa, Mohamed curates a mosaic of narratives that resonate with people from Washington DC, across Africa, and within academic circles like Howard University.



Tacharna Crump

Founder and Executive Group
Youth Entrepreneur Institute (YEI)

Tacharna Crump is a dynamic entrepreneur, community advocate, and artist renowned for her innovative approaches to fostering economic sustainability in marginalized communities. Tacharna has been instrumental in bridging the gap between young individuals and the resources they need to thrive economically.

In 2015, Tacharna founded the Youth Entrepreneur Institute (YEI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to combating poverty through art and innovation. YEI reflects her visionary commitment to creating platforms where young people can harness their talents and become pivotal contributors to their communities.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Ronnette Meyers

President and CEO
JLAN Solutions

Ronnette Meyers is President and CEO of JLAN Solutions, a leading provider of management, training, and information technology services to Federal, state, and local government.

After an extensive career as a Federal employee, Ms. Meyers helped found a small, woman-owned government contractor, serving as Senior Vice President for Corporate Services. She was an integral part of the company's development into an award-winning business with over \$34 million in annual revenues.

In 2010, having honed her executive management and leadership skills, Ms. Meyers took the leap and founded her own firm, JLAN Solutions, LLC. JLAN now serves numerous Federal and DC government agencies.



Rosemary Suggs-Evans

Director
DC Department of Small and Local Business Development
(DSLBD)

In her current role as Interim Director for the DC Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD), Ms. Suggs-Evans is responsible for all aspects of agency operations. Under Ms. Suggs-Evans' leadership, a plethora of programs that support our local small businesses have flourished, including the Aspire to Entrepreneurship program for returning citizens, the Equity Impact Enterprise program for resident-owned disadvantaged businesses, and the District Connect conference that avails our local entrepreneurs to opportunities and resources.



Ryan Chaffo

Senior Business Banking Relationship Manager
The Washington, D.C. Regional Center

Ryan Chaffo is a senior business banking relationship manager for the Personal and Business Banking team in the Washington, D.C. Regional Center. His primary responsibility is to grow City National Bank's presence in the Greater D.C. market through client and talent acquisition, alongside a targeted marketing strategy. Mr. Chaffo serves as an Executive Committee Member on the Board of Directors of the DC Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Sharon R. Pinder

President and CEO
The Capital Region Minority Supplier Development Council
Operator – The Virginia MBDA Business Center

Sharon R. Pinder is the President and Chief Executive Officer at the Capital Region Minority Supplier Development Council (CRMSDC), a non-profit organization with a compelling mission: bridging corporations and government agencies with highly competitive Minority Business Enterprises. Her leadership has not only helped with leveling the playing field but has substantially expanded opportunities for these enterprises to thrive. Under her guidance, CRMSDC diligently represents the interests of over 700 businesses in the Maryland/DC and Northern Virginia region. Sharon R. Pinder made history as the first appointed Cabinet Secretary of the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs in Maryland.



Stephanie Campbell

Executive Director
Congress Heights Community Training and Development Corp.

Stephanie Campbell is a highly accomplished professional with six years of valuable experience in the government and private sector. She currently serves as the Executive Director for the Congress Heights Community Training and Development Corp. Through her experiences, she pursued her passion for public service and honed her skills in various aspects of workforce development and economic development.



Tamara Zeidan

Director of Innovation
District of Columbia Department of Insurance,
Securities & Banking (DISB)

Tamara is the Director of Innovation at DISB where she is leading the new Office of Innovation. Tamara is leading efforts to strengthen the Fintech ecosystem in the District by increasing the number of social impact driven FinTech companies that offer products and services that promote financial inclusion and equitable economic growth development in the District. Prior to joining DISB, she served as a U.S. State Department Delegate in Morocco, supporting/strengthening women-led startups in Casablanca. She also worked at the Malala Fund, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund and the United Nations Reliefs and Works Agency (UNRWA). Through her work, Tamara is committed to making a difference in the world.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Sybongile Cook

Director of Business Development & Strategy
Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development
(DMPED)

Sybongile Cook is a member of the Mayor's Financial Literacy Council and has held multiple roles within the Executive Office of the Mayor of the District of Columbia since 2009. She started as Program Manager expanding the framework of the District's Bank on DC programs. Known as a strategic and innovative thinker, Sybongile Cook is successful at convening, facilitating and executing extraordinary and complex public-private partnerships. In her role directing Bank on DC, she fostered a collaborative and learning environment where every partner was valued and trusted to contribute towards a goal of financial inclusion. Her commitment to consumers and youth is unwavering and her energy, passion and can-do attitude are both infectious and empowering!



Timothy Q. Kime, Jr.

CEO
Camino Consulting Group

An award-winning and accomplished leader, Tim Kime is passionate about transforming people, organizations and communities. He is the President of Kime Leadership Associates offering executive coaching, meeting facilitation, motivational speaking, and team-building for organizations of all sizes. He is a certified Expert Professional Life Coach. Among his clients are The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, Children's National Medical Center, The George Washington University, Goodwill of Greater Washington and National Cooperative Bank.



Tiffany Crowe

Director
Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection
(DLCP)

Tiffany Crowe's confirmation as the permanent Director of the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection (DLCP) was met with resounding approval by The Council of the Committee on Public Works and Operations on November 7, 2023. Her journey in this role commenced when Mayor Muriel Bowser first appointed her as the Acting Director on September 7, 2023. Director Crowe also worked as a Senior Advisor in the Office of Market Intelligence at the Securities and Exchange Commission.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Tonya Vidal Kinlow, M.P.A

Chair
DC Chamber of Commerce

Tonya Vidal Kinlow, M.P.A., is Vice President of Community Engagement, Advocacy & Government Affairs at Children's National Hospital. She leads local and national advocacy and education efforts under the umbrella of the Child Health Advocacy Institute. In this role, Ms. Kinlow leads the hospital's mission to advance policy and systems changes to achieve health equity for all children. She also works with federal and local government stakeholders to ensure that the needs of children are kept in the forefront of the development of policies and regulations.



Vida Ali

Ben's Chili Bowl

Vida Ali was born in Trinidad & Tobago. Vida moved with her family to the Washington, DC area. She began her work life at Ben's Chili Bowl, the iconic Washington, DC restaurant that was opened in 1958 by Ben and Virginia Ali. After spending over 25 years in the entertainment business in Hollywood, Vida returned to Washington, DC in 2009 following the death of founder Ben Ali. She is currently working with the family to forward the expansion of the Ben's Chili Bowl brand as well as the continuation of its legacy in the DC community and beyond.



Yohannes Tafesse

Founder and CEO
Gratitude Systems

Yohannes is an influential and forward-thinking business executive, boasting over 15 years of spearheading successful projects across a variety of sectors. He's the entrepreneurial force behind several thriving startups and has a robust background in IT and Telecom. As the founder and CEO of Gratitude Systems, Yohannes is at the forefront of delivering cutting-edge technology to clients. He also plays a crucial role as the Vice President of Redfox Solutions Group, which specializes in datacenter and cloud solutions across Africa.

Yohannes holds an M.S. in Electrical Engineering from Michigan Technological University and another M.S. in Computer Science from Georgia Technological University specializing in Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence.

MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS



Zack Schwartz

Chief Information & Technology Officer
Events DC

Mr. Schwartz currently holds the position of Chief Information & Technology Officer at Events DC. He spearheads the strategic development and implementation of the organization's technological roadmap, meticulously safeguarding the integrity and security of our infrastructure while propelling innovation to elevate the user experience.

Previously, Mr. Schwartz served as a senior advisor to the Secretary of Commerce and assumed the role of acting Chief Information Officer within her office. Prior to these positions, Mr. Schwartz held various leadership roles at the US Census Bureau, including overseeing the pivotal 2020 Census Trust & Safety Team.

NOTES

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Lucky Ames

Mekdy Alemayehu

Kamryn Bess

Jasmine Boyd

Ryan Chaffo

Kennedy Chester

Aja Clark

Veronica Cordova

Jenny Cruz

Paul Drehoff

Michelle Fennelly

Aaron Fenwick

Angela Franco

Derek Ford

Christian Garcia

Antonio Guernica

Don Martin

Olufunmilayo Hall

Natalie Harris

Ana Harvey

Jacquay Henderson

Michelle Henson

Claudia Herrera

Nancy Hicks

Elna Howard

Keith Howard

Mary Howard

Ebony Johnson

William Eric Linsey

Cody Leihgeber-Carpenter

Ronnette Meyers

Destinee Mitchell

Kiesha Mims

Charles Motte

Sherryl Newman

Ishi Patterson

Eduardo Perdomo

Kishan Putta

Arthur Swift

Robert Topenio

Mary Urdaneta

Larry Webb

Linda Wharton Boyd

Kelly Whittie

Alan Wong

Tamika Wood

Alan Young

**DON'T WORRY ABOUT BEING
SUCCESSFUL, BUT WORK TOWARD
BEING SIGNIFICANT AND
THE SUCCESS WILL
NATURALLY FOLLOW.**

Oprah Winfrey



2024 DC SMALL
BUSINESS SUMMIT
AND EXPO