

National Black Justice Coalition and U.S. Small Business Administration Launch LGBT Economic Empowerment Tour

'Many Faces~One Dream' to Travel to Thirteen Cities to Promote Entrepreneurship



LGBT Economic Empowerment Tour



The **National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)**, the nation's leading Black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization, is proud to partner with the **U.S. Small Business Administration** to launch an LGBT economic empowerment tour. **"Many Faces~One Dream"** seeks to bring focus on our community's economic power, innovation and creativity in the small business sphere. The tour will occur in thirteen major cities throughout the country that have a significant minority LGBT presence, including Atlanta, Brooklyn, Chicago, Detroit, Ft. Lauderdale/Miami, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Newark, Oakland/San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.

The harsh reality is that workplace and employment discrimination have especially grim consequences in LGBT communities. In fact, the Williams Institute found that between 15 percent and 43 percent of gay and transgender workers have experienced some form of discrimination on the job solely because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Furthermore, 8 percent to 17 percent of gay and transgender workers report being passed over for a job or fired because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. "Many Faces~One Dream" serves as an innovative approach to creating sustainable economic opportunities in the LGBT community.

"Many Faces~One Dream" participants will be grouped into two tracks: "Starting Your Business" and "Taking Your Business to the Next Level." In the first track, training will be provided on the key elements of a business plan, loans, marketing, and SBA's program and services. The second track will be geared toward LGBT firms that are currently in business but want to expand and grow. Topics will include lending, technology, health/life insurance, and investors. On the first day,

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each event will consist of a one-day training forum.

One-on-one counseling as well as seminars on financial literacy, workforce development and job creation will be conducted on the second day. Attendees will have access to some of the most influential financial backers and business leaders in America.

"Despite the challenges we face, gay and transgender people represent an

untapped segment of aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners," explains NBJC Executive Director Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks. "Rich with ideas and talent, LGBT men and women are creating and leading their own companies. It's time to expand the conversation from economic security to economic empowerment. It's time for us to own our power."

"The LGBT small business community is helping us create an economy built to last. That is why we are proud to partner with the National Black Justice Coalition — an organization that represents the many faces and true diversity of the movement for full equality," says Eugene Cornelius Jr., Deputy Associate Administrator for Field Operations at the Small Business Administration. "Equipped with the necessary resources and tools, LGBT small business owners and entrepreneurs will have access to a wealth of knowledge, opportunity and economic growth."

For more information, please contact Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks at 202-319-1552, ext. 100 or email sba_tour@nbjc.org