

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Invitation to U.S. Presidential Candidates to Speak at the 124th National Black Business Conference

U.S. Presidential Candidates Invited to Present Economic Platforms and Agenda to Support Black Business Enterprises (BBEs)

Tuskegee, AL – Friday, August 9, 2024 – The National Alliance for Black Business (NABB), a non-partisan, non-profit organization, proudly extends a warm invitation to all U.S. presidential candidates from each political party to the prestigious NBL's 124th National Black Business Conference®. Co-founded by The National Business League®, founded in 1900 by Booker T. Washington, the National Black Chamber of Commerce®, founded in 1993, and The World Conference of Mayors®, founded in 1984, this event provides an invaluable platform for U.S. presidential candidates to present their economic platforms and agendas to support Black-owned businesses.

The conference, scheduled for August 21-25, 2024, at the Hilton Atlanta Hotel, coincides with Atlanta Black Business Week™. This nationwide event aims to empower Black entrepreneurs and foster economic growth within the Black community. The World Conference of Mayors will also be celebrating its 40th Anniversary, bringing together Black Mayors from throughout the U.S. and the Pan-African Diaspora.

The latest Black business economic data from the U.S. Census reveals significant disparities impacting Black-owned businesses across the nation. Despite representing 13.6% of the population, Black-owned businesses account for only 2.3% of employer firms, highlighting a persistent gap in economic participation. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges, with an estimated 40% of Black-owned businesses closing during the economic shutdowns. Compounding this, less than 3% of COVID-19 Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans were awarded to Black-owned businesses, severely hindering their recovery efforts. Additionally, the pandemic's disproportionate impact on Black communities led to significant layoffs in the private sector of Black men and women, as well as the departure of Black women executives from corporate positions. These factors forced many to start businesses out of necessity and survival to support their families. However, these new businesses often operate disconnected from mainstream resources and support ecosystems that primarily benefit the majority population, further perpetuating the cycle of economic inequality. Structural barriers, including limited access to capital and discriminatory lending practices, continue to restrict the growth and sustainability of Black-owned enterprises, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions to address these systemic issues.

Importance of Presidential Candidates' Participation

The 124th National Black Business Conference has already garnered significant attention, with hundreds of attendees registered. We are excited to announce that the distinguished keynote speaker for the Pan-African Diaspora Black Business Luncheon will be Africa's 26th President

of Liberia, Joseph Nyumah Boakai. President Boakai will address the conference on the vital role Black Business Enterprises (BBEs) are playing in fostering U.S.-Africa bilateral trade and driving economic development throughout the Pan-African Diaspora. It is crucial for presidential candidates to participate in this conference, as it provides a unique opportunity to connect with the vibrant Black business community and articulate their vision for economic empowerment, job creation, and wealth building through entrepreneurship. This vision aligns with Booker T. Washington's business model, which emphasized economic self-reliance and entrepreneurship as a means of empowerment for African Americans. Washington advocated for the development of practical skills and property ownership to create economic stability and social progress. His philosophy underscored the importance of trades and vocational education, hard work, thrift, and business ownership as the keys to economic advancement and self-improvement—principles that remain vital today for driving sustainable economic growth and empowerment within the Black community.

Call to Action

NABB earnestly invites all U.S. presidential candidates to join us at the 124th National Black Business Conference and share their economic platforms and agendas during dedicated sessions. We encourage candidates to address topics such as access to capital, government contracting opportunities, policies that promote equitable economic growth, and strategies to overcome systemic barriers affecting Black entrepreneurs. It is crucial to provide policies that will help BBEs build capacity, scope, and scale, while expanding bi/tri-lateral trade among Black American BBEs throughout the Pan-African Diaspora, particularly in Africa and the Caribbean.

Options for Presidential Participation:

- Send a 2–5-minute video greeting, highlighting your economic agenda to measurably support Black businesses and entrepreneurs over the next four years.
- Attend in person to speak for 10-15 minutes live before more than 1,500 registered Black-owned businesses on Friday, August 23, 2024. Each candidate will be allotted 15 minutes to address the global audience, with representatives from over 32 Pan-African countries and Black-owned businesses from all 50 states and internationally.

Event Details

- **Date:** August 21-25, 2024
- **Time:** Friday, August 23, 2024, from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm EST
- **Location:** Hilton Atlanta Hotel, Atlanta, GA
- **Occasion:** The 40th Anniversary of the World Conference of Mayors®

About the National Alliance for Black Business

The National Alliance for Black Business (NABB) is committed to advancing the interests of Black-owned businesses and fostering economic empowerment within the Black community. As a non-partisan, non-profit organization, NABB strives to create a level playing field for Black

Business Enterprises (BBEs), ensuring equitable access to opportunities, resources, and networks necessary for success.

Statements

*"Highlighting and providing their economic platform and agenda to support Black-owned businesses over the next four years is crucial for each presidential candidate. This engagement can drive meaningful change and demonstrate their commitment to the economic empowerment of Black entrepreneurs." - **Charles H. DeBow, III, President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce***

*"Now more than ever, it is imperative that we hold our leaders accountable to ensure that Black-owned businesses have the resources and support needed to thrive. The 124th National Black Business Conference is the perfect platform for presidential candidates to demonstrate their commitment to economic justice and empowerment for the Black community." - **Dr. Ken L. Harris, President/CEO of The National Business League***

*"This conference is not just an event; it is a call to action for the nation's leaders to engage with the Black business community in a meaningful way. The policies and agendas presented here will shape the future of Black entrepreneurship and economic development across the United States and beyond." - **The Honorable Former Mayor Johnny Ford, Founder and President of The World Conference of Mayors***

Contact Information

For more information about the National Alliance for Black Business Co-Founders or the 124th National Black Business Conference, please contact:

- **Dr. Ken Harris, President/CEO, The National Business League:** kharris@nationalbusinessleague.org
- **Charles H. DeBow, III, President/CEO, National Black Chamber of Commerce:** cdebow@nationalbcc.org

Global Media Contact

For media inquiries or interview requests, please contact our global media partner:

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Conclusion

We invite all presidential candidates to address us at the 124th National Black Business Conference and engage with the diverse and dynamic Black business community. Together, let's

shape the future of Black business, empower our communities, and create economic opportunities for all.

Note: Please confirm your attendance by no later than Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at 5 pm EST.

For more information about the event and the National Alliance for Black Business, visit <https://www.nationalblackbusinessconference.com>