



IMPACT REPORT 2024



Leave No Diverse Small Business Behind



A Message from the President

Reflecting on our achievements, I am proud of the significant progress we've made toward our strategic goals. Our collaborative efforts have led to groundbreaking legislation in government contracting and local procurement, reinforcing the government's role in fostering an environment for collective success.

Our mission is to create an ecosystem where businesses thrive, individuals pursue their aspirations, and communities prosper. We are dedicated to ensuring our country can compete on the global stage, making decisions rooted in hope rather than fear.

In 2024, the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce experienced remarkable growth, expanding our membership from 10 founding members in 2022 to 1,002. This diverse community enriches our advocacy and initiatives, such as the Statewide Small Business Awards Week, the Statewide Small Women and Diverse Small Parade Walk, and the National Virtual Biz Pitch Competitions, which provided vital support to our members.

We also launched the Ambassador Committee Program to develop leadership skills and connect with community leaders. Our engagement with economic development agencies, law enforcement, and educational institutions has addressed pressing issues for our members.

In both our personal and professional lives, we often choose to sidestep challenges. Instead, let's focus on the possibilities ahead. This mindset is fulfilling and encourages broader engagement. While we all have limited time, let's maximize it by working diligently and dreaming bigger!

Here's to 2025.

Aldrica Lattimore

Aldrica Lattimore

President

Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce



Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce Year-End Impact Report 2024

As we conclude an extraordinary year, the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce (VDCC) celebrates our remarkable growth from 10 founding members in January 2022 to a vibrant community of 1,002 members by December 2024.

This year has been a testament to our mission of empowering diverse businesses across Virginia and beyond. This report highlights our key accomplishments in 2024 and outlines our vision for an even more impactful 2025.



Our Mission

The Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to promoting the growth and sustainability of diverse businesses, fostering an inclusive economic environment that supports entrepreneurship, innovation, and community engagement for small women and diverse-owned businesses from underserved communities..



Membership Growth

January 2022 Chamber Launched

10 inaugural members

December 2024

1,002 members



Geographic Reach

While primarily serving Virginia, our members and Chamber Ambassador Committee represent states including California, Illinois, Rhode Island, Alabama, Florida, Texas, Maryland, and Washington, enriching our collaborative efforts.

Key Accomplishments in 2024



1 Membership Expansion

New Member Initiatives

Targeted outreach efforts led to a 900% increase in membership.

Diversity & Inclusion 65% of new members identify as small minority-owned businesses, underscoring our commitment to diversity.

2 Community Engagement

Networking Events

Hosted over 20 networking events, connecting members with local and national business leaders.

Workshops & Training

Conducted 20 professional development workshops, attended by over 300 members.

3 Signature Initiatives

Statewide Small Business Awards Week

Celebrated excellence among women and diverse-owned small businesses with awards in categories such as:

- Woman-Owned Small Business of the Year
- Emerging Entrepreneurial Business of the Year
- Innovators Small Business of the Year
- Perseverance Business of the Year
- Corporate and Community Leader Awards

This event honored the achievements of our members and highlighted their contributions to the economy and community.

Key Accomplishments in 2024



Statewide Small Women and Diverse Small Business Parade Walk Celebration

A vibrant parade celebrating the contributions of women and diverse entrepreneurs attracted over 400 participants, promoting visibility and community spirit.



Department of Treasury OSDBU 50 States Initiative Alliance

Formed a strategic alliance with the Department of Treasury's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, enhancing advocacy efforts and providing members with vital resources nationwide.

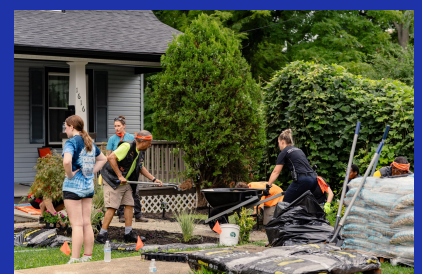


Key Accomplishments in 2024

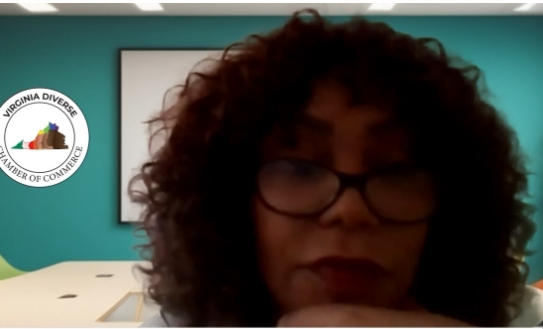


National Roanoke Community Beautification Day

Recognized by Governor Glenn Youngkin and Roanoke Mayor-elect Sherman Lea Sr., this initiative brought together members and community leaders to enhance local public spaces and residential properties in underserved and fostering community pride and engagement. Small businesses partner for networking and business opportunities.



Key Accomplishments in 2024



4 Legislative Milestone

Driving Diversity and Economic Empowerment



We are thrilled to announce that one of our top legislative priorities, HB 1361, has been signed by Governor Glenn Youngkin. This bill aims to provide a competitive advantage for Virginia businesses when competing for government contracts against out-of-state vendors. The legislation was further enhanced by the addition of HB 164, a provision envisioned by our esteemed Leadership Board Member, James Lewis, back in April 2023. This new provision will empower local governments to establish a contracting preference for local businesses. Less than a year later, thanks to the leadership of the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce, this vision has become a law.

5 Entrepreneur Training Programs

8-Week Training Programs



Successfully launched two comprehensive training programs, engaging 64 participants. Of these, 42 graduates completed business plans, positioning them for success in the competitive marketplace.

CDFI Financing Streamlining

Facilitated streamlined access to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) financing for graduates, enabling them to secure funding for their business ventures.

6 National Virtual Biz Pitch Competitions

Biz Pitch Competitions

Conducted two virtual business pitch competitions featuring 20 participants, culminating in 6 winners who each received grants totaling \$10,000. This initiative provided critical funding and exposure for emerging entrepreneurs, fostering innovation and creativity in our business community.

Key Accomplishments in 2024



7 Newsletter

DBE Dispatch Newsletter



The official free newsletter of the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce, now with 15,000 subscribers, published 12 editions in 2024. Each edition featured diverse small businesses and covered topics that educate, inform, and inspire our community, reinforcing our commitment to keeping members connected and informed.

8 Advocacy & Representation

Policy Initiatives



Engaged with local and state lawmakers to advocate for policies supporting small businesses and equitable access to resources to include City of Virginia Beach Mayor Robert Bobby Dyer, 79th District Delegate Rae Cousins, and Interim Roanoke City Manager Dr. Lydia Patton.

Partnerships

Established partnerships with organizations like the US Department of Treasury OSDBU, Virginia Beach Procurement and Finance Department and Virginia Beach Sheriff Office, City of Roanoke Police Department and RISE Collaborative Center enhancing access to funding and resources for our members.

9 Economic Impact

Business Growth

Members reported an average revenue growth of 25% in 2024, attributed to the resources and connections made through the Chamber.

Job Creation

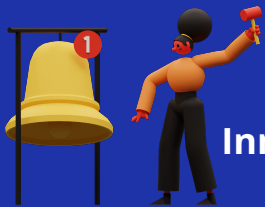
Members collectively created over 100 new jobs, contributing significantly to local economies.



Key Accomplishments in 2024

10 Technology & Innovation

Digital Platforms



Launched a member-exclusive online portal providing resources, networking opportunities, and a marketplace for members to showcase their products and services.

Innovation Grants

Awarded \$20,000 in grants and donations to support technology adoption among small businesses, fostering innovation in our community.

11 Business Mixers, Supporting Small Business Development

In 2024, the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce successfully hosted 10 Business Mixers, providing a platform for entrepreneurs to network, pitch their business ideas, and compete for valuable prizes. These mixers were instrumental in fostering community engagement and supporting small business development.



Event Highlights Biz Pitch Opportunities

Each mixer featured dedicated time for businesses to present their innovative ideas to a panel of judges and an audience of supportive peers.

Event Highlights: Prizes for Growth

Participants competed for essential business tools, including:

- Laptops to enhance productivity
- Notebooks for effective planning and organization
- Printers for marketing and administrative needs
- Business Accessories to elevate their professional presence



Impact

These mixers not only provided entrepreneurs with the chance to showcase their ventures but also facilitated meaningful connections with potential partners and investors. By creating an engaging environment, we empowered small businesses to thrive and grow, further solidifying our commitment to economic empowerment and diversity in the business landscape.

Key Accomplishments in 2024



12 Ambassador Committee Program

In 2024, the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce launched the Ambassador Committee Program, designed to cultivate leadership skills among our members while enhancing their visibility and influence within the business community.

Program Highlights: Leadership Development

Ambassadors participated in meeting sessions focused on developing essential leadership skills and public speaking abilities.



Networking Opportunities

Members engaged with leaders and executives across the political, federal, and corporate arenas, building vital connections that can open doors for collaboration and growth.

Community Impact

By serving as representatives of the Chamber, Ambassadors played a crucial role in advocating for diverse businesses and fostering an inclusive economic environment.

The Ambassador Committee Program not only empowered participants to grow personally and professionally but also strengthened the Chamber's mission to support and advocate for diverse businesses. We look forward to continuing this initiative, expanding our reach and impact in the community!

AMBASSADOR

Introducing the 2024 Ambassador Program and Committee Members

We are thrilled to announce the launch of the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce's Ambassador Program for 2024.

The Ambassador Program is an integral part of our organization, designed to foster connections, promote engagement, and support the growth of our diverse business community.

This year, we have assembled a dedicated group of professionals who are passionate about our mission and eager to serve as ambassadors for the chamber. The Ambassador Program is a unique opportunity for members to take an active role in representing the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce. Ambassadors serve as advocates for our organization, helping to increase awareness, facilitate networking, and provide support to our members. They play a vital role in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the business community, and we are proud to have them as part of our team.

We are excited to introduce our 2024 Ambassador Committee members:



JEMEKA ROBERTSON
An entrepreneur, healthcare, and community advocate, Jemeka is dedicated to promoting economic empowerment and advocating for equitable access to healthcare.



BRIGITTE O'MICHAELS
As an entrepreneur, healthcare, and community advocate, Brigitte is committed to fostering economic empowerment and supporting the growth of small businesses within diverse communities.



KANYA FORD
A passionate advocate for promoting entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic advancement and empowering rising business owners.



JILL ADAIR
With a background in education and entrepreneurship, Jill is dedicated to advocating for the needs of the business community and fostering meaningful connections.



CARLA LOUIS
An entrepreneur, consultant, and advocate, Carla is committed to supporting the growth of small businesses and advocating for economic inclusion and diversity.



KIM MAJOR
An entrepreneur, healthcare, and community advocate, Kim is passionate about promoting access to healthcare services and supporting the economic development of diverse communities.



MONTANA TARPLEY
Driven by a deep commitment to youth empowerment and community betterment, Montana Tarpley has established Second Hands as a diversion program, seeking to support individuals who have been affected by the justice system and prevent the creation of a criminal record.



PAUL BURNETTE
Paul's dedication to the betterment of his community is evident through his active involvement in workforce development and his commitment to helping others achieve personal and professional success.



MICHELLE AUGUSTUS
Michelle's entrepreneurial acumen and commitment to excellence make her a valuable asset within the chamber, embodying the spirit of innovation and service that defines the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce.

To learn more about our Ambassadors, we encourage you to visit the Ambassador page on our website at www.virginiadiversechamberofcommerce.org. There, you can find detailed information about each Ambassador and their contributions to the chamber.

We invite all members to engage with our Ambassadors, learn from their expertise, and take advantage of the opportunities they provide for networking, mentorship, and collaboration. Our Ambassadors are here to support you, and together, we can make the most of our membership with the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce.



Key Accomplishments in 2024



13 Community Engagement

In 2024, the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce significantly enhanced its commitment to community engagement by actively collaborating with a diverse array of stakeholders, including economic development agencies, law enforcement agencies, mayors, city managers, delegates, college students, and university presidents.

Engagement Highlights: Strategic Meetings

Our leadership engaged in discussions with local and state officials, as well as law enforcement, to advocate for policies that benefit diverse businesses and promote community safety and economic growth.



Engagement Highlights: Collaborative Initiatives

By partnering with economic development agencies and educational institutions, we identified opportunities for resources, internships, and workforce development programs that support small businesses and empower students.

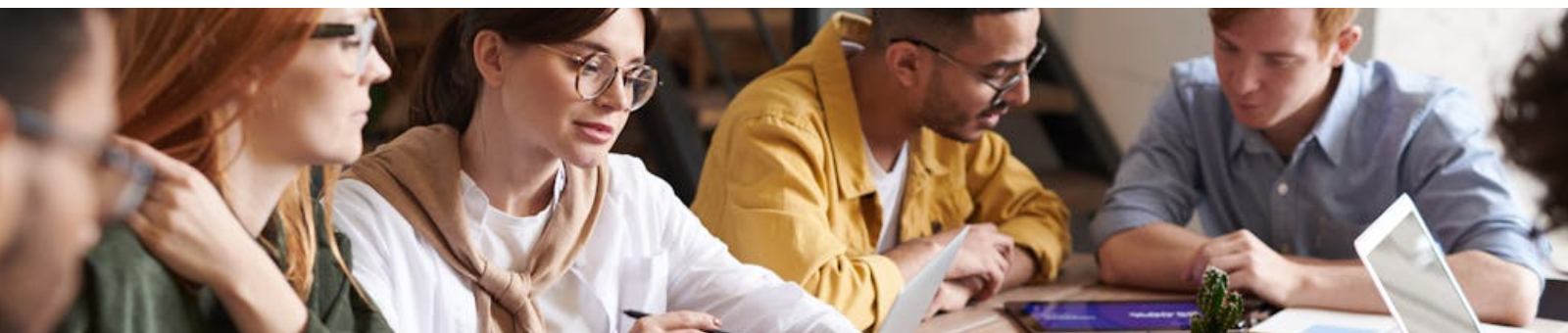
Engagement Highlights: Impactful Advocacy

These engagements allowed us to amplify the voices of our members and young entrepreneurs, ensuring their needs and challenges are recognized at municipal, state, and educational levels.

Through these efforts, the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce strengthened its role as a vital advocate for our business community, fostering relationships that drive positive change and economic empowerment across Virginia. We look forward to continuing these initiatives and enhancing our collaborative impact in the future!



Key Accomplishments in 2024



14 Internship Program



In 2024, the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce launched an internship program made possible through a grant from Atlantic Union Bank. This initiative enabled us to hire a college intern, providing valuable hands-on experience in the field of economic development and small business advocacy. The intern contributed to various Chamber initiatives, gaining insights into operational strategies while supporting our mission of empowering diverse businesses.

This program not only offered professional development for the intern but also strengthened our capacity to serve our members and the broader community.

High School Entrepreneur Festival

The Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce proudly participated in the Hampton Roads High School Entrepreneur Festival in 2024, where our business owners were on-site to provide mentorship and support to aspiring young entrepreneurs.

Engagement Highlights: Networking Opportunities



The festival facilitated connections between students and established business leaders, fostering a collaborative spirit and encouraging the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Our involvement in the Entrepreneur Festival underscores our commitment to nurturing young talent and promoting entrepreneurship within the community, ensuring that future business leaders are equipped for success.

Key Accomplishments in 2024



15 Statewide Food Truck Central Initiative

In 2024, the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce launched the Statewide Food Truck Central Initiative in partnership with Lowe's Home Improvement. This innovative program aims to support food truck entrepreneurs by providing them with essential resources and access to 13 Lowe's stores across the state.



Initiative Highlights: Resource Access

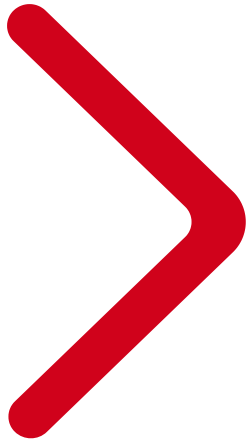
Participating food truck operators receive business development and marketing support to enhance their operations and improve their service offerings.

Initiative Highlights: Networking Opportunities

The initiative facilitated connections between food truck owners and local communities, fostering collaboration and promoting diverse culinary experiences throughout Virginia.

The Statewide Food Truck Central Initiative exemplifies our commitment to empowering diverse entrepreneurs and strengthening the local economy. By partnering with Lowe's, we are proud to support food truck businesses in their growth and success across the state.

LOOKING AHEAD . . .



Looking Ahead Goals for 2025
Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce- we are planning a transition to become a national organization for 2025.

Rationale for Transition

This strategic move will enhance our ability to serve our diverse membership and advocate effectively on their behalf. With over a thousand members primarily in Virginia and additional members in states like **New York, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, California, Alabama, Georgia,** and **Florida**, we are well-positioned to expand our impact nationally.

Impact

Transitioning to a national organization will significantly increase our visibility and strengthen our advocacy efforts, ultimately benefiting our members across the country.

Sustaining Growth

Aim to reach 1,500 members by the end of 2025, focusing on strategic outreach and enhanced member benefits.

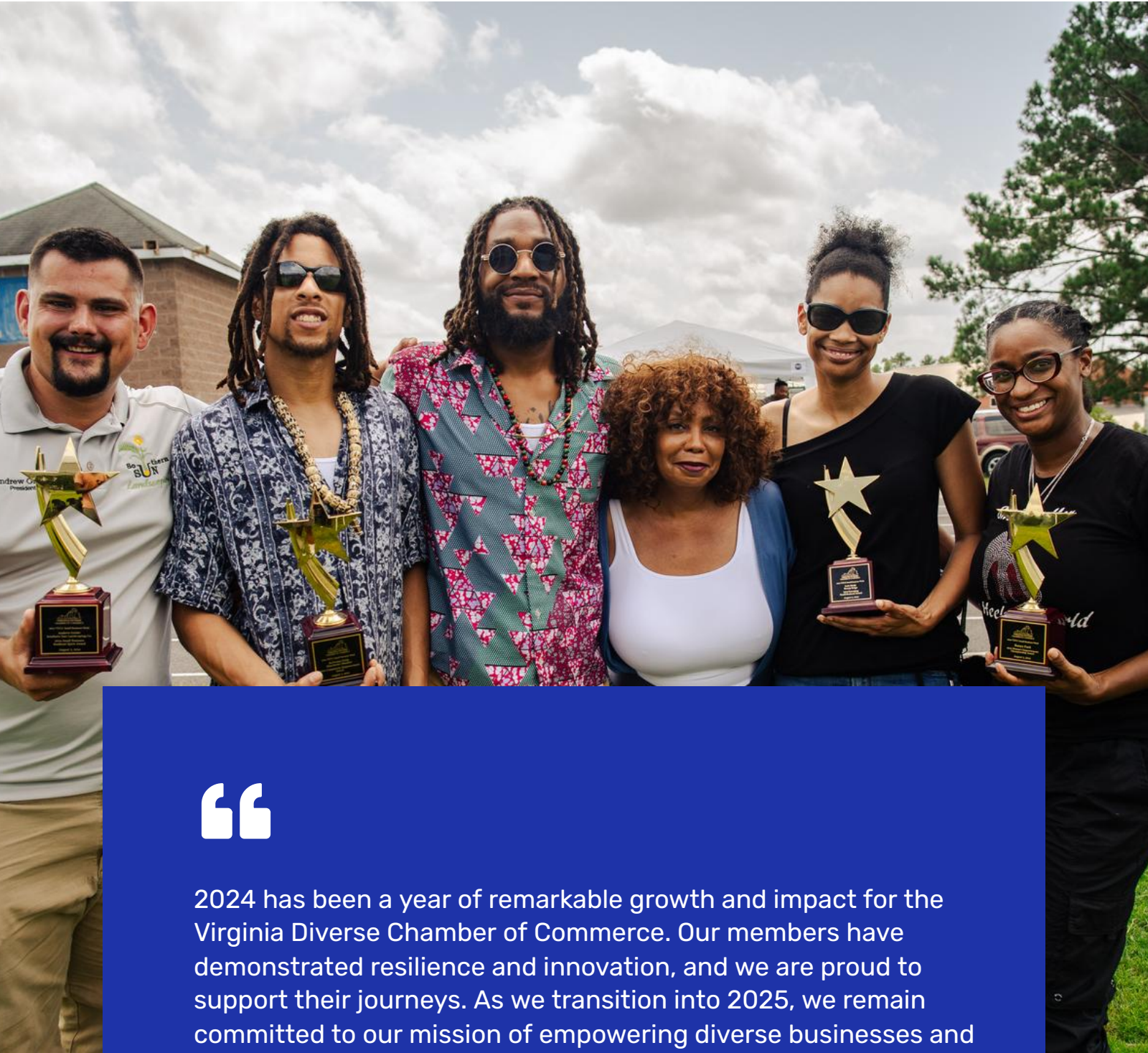
Expanding Services

Introduce mentorship programs pairing experienced entrepreneurs with emerging business leaders to facilitate knowledge transfer and growth.

Strengthening Advocacy

Continue to amplify our voice at the state and national levels, ensuring the needs of diverse businesses are represented.

Looking Ahead



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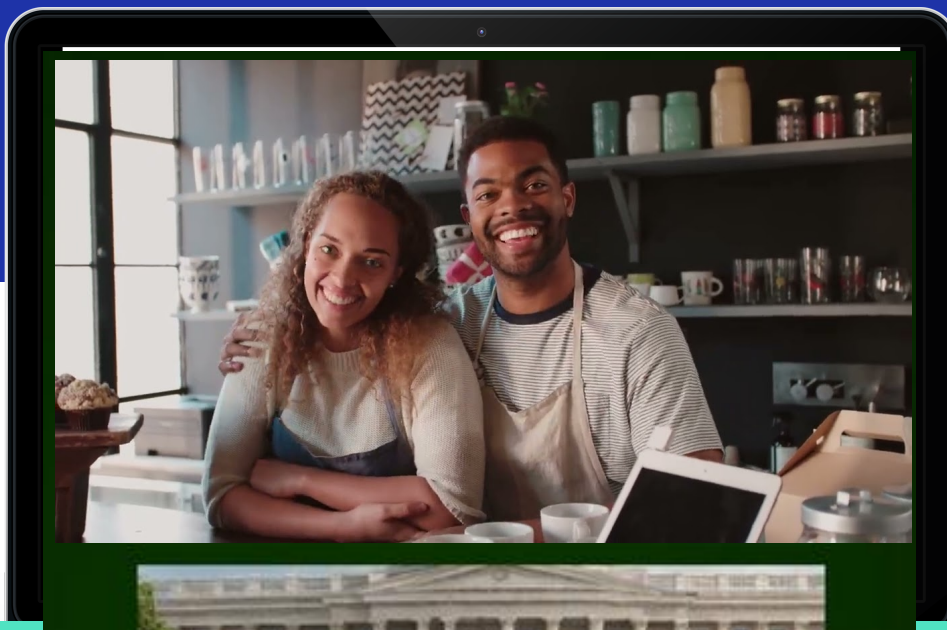
2024 has been a year of remarkable growth and impact for the Virginia Diverse Chamber of Commerce. Our members have demonstrated resilience and innovation, and we are proud to support their journeys. As we transition into 2025, we remain committed to our mission of empowering diverse businesses and fostering an inclusive economic environment.

Together, we will continue to make a lasting impact in our communities and beyond.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to our members, partners, and supporters for your dedication and contributions throughout 2024.

Together, we are building a brighter future for all.



Stay Connected

For more information, please visit our website or follow us on social media to stay updated on our initiatives and events.

Contact Us



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Let's make 2025 the best year yet!