AUG 2026 - SEPT 2026
VOLUME 9 | EDITION 4

TAKING CARE OF Business

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Tracy Rainge & Ki Jedah Warmsley

ProsperU Broadens Financial Education For Youth, Adults and Entrepreneurs

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Understanding the Financial Advising Needs of the African American Community
- Understanding Mental Health in Black Communities
- Clark's Beauty Supply Moves to New Raytown Home
- And Much More!

TAKING CARE OF
BUSINESS

Servicing the Greater Kansas City Area

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Inside This Issue

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Taking Care of Business...

As the Executive Director of Rasheed Communications and Editor of Taking Care of Business, a new innovative bi-monthly business news magazine, our hope is to bring to you local and national news coverage from the African American community. Our focus is on premier black-owned businesses, powerful women in business, minority small business owners, and startup companies. We discribute this bi-monthly publication commercially and residentially with a target circulation of 5,000 copies six times per calendar year.

We highlight corporations that reinvest in our communities and further advance African Americans and women up their corporate ladder. We also intend to expose those comapnies which do not. We would like to provide your business with the opportunity to expand your marketing and advertising promotions for the Summer. Our goal is to build bridges so that the businesses in our community will support each other more. We will continue to foster an environment that encourages customers to shop locally for goods and service as we work to strengthen our community.

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Sincerely,

Saleem Rasheed, Jr.

Saleem Rasheed, Jr.
Executive Director

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UNDERSTANDING THE FINANCIAL ADVISING NEEDS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Financial advising is a key service for people and families. It helps them build wealth, secure their future, and reach financial goals. For the African American community, financial advising is especially important because of its unique historical and systemic challenges.

These challenges have affected wealth accumulation and financial security. Understanding these needs can help financial advisors provide better and tailored solutions. Incorporating strategies for African American financial planning can strengthen connections with this demographic.

The Value of Financial Advising in African American Communities

The African American community places great value on financial advising when it aligns with goals like economic empowerment, intergenerational wealth building, and community support. These priorities show a strong commitment to financial stability and prosperity, making financial advising essential.

Economic Empowerment: African Americans see financial literacy as a path to empowerment and independence. Advisors can help clients improve credit scores, manage debt, and build emergency savings. This approach addresses immediate financial needs while preparing for long-term growth.

Intergenerational Wealth: Building wealth that can be passed down to future generations is a major goal for African American families. Advisors who specialize in estate planning, life insurance, and retirement savings can provide crucial guidance.

Entrepreneurship: African Americans are one of the fastest-growing groups of entrepreneurs in the U.S. Financial advisors can offer valuable advice on business planning, tax strategies, and investment opportunities to support entrepreneurial success.

Community Support: Many African Americans prioritize giving back to their communities through charitable donations or projects. Advisors can help clients create philanthropic strategies that align with their values and goals.

Challenges Facing the African American Population

To serve the African American community effectively, financial advisors must understand the unique challenges they face, many of which stem from systemic barriers and historical inequities. Generations of discriminatory policies have created significant wealth gaps and limited economic mobility for many African Americans.

These historical injustices continue to impact financial realities today. By acknowledging these challenges and their roots, financial advisors can provide culturally informed guidance and solutions to help their clients navigate these obstacles and achieve their financial goals.

Wealth Gap: The Federal Reserve reports that the median wealth of white households is nearly 10 times that of Black households. This gap limits opportunities for homeownership, higher education, and business investments. Black financial planning strategies can help address these disparities.

Historical Discrimination: Practices like redlining and discriminatory lending have left African American families without the generational wealth that other groups inherit. This creates additional hurdles to financial security.

Limited Access to Financial Services: Historically, traditional financial institutions have underserved African American communities. This has led to reliance on predatory lenders or informal networks. Financial advice for African Americans can bridge these gaps.

Higher Debt Burdens: African American families often carry higher levels of student loan and credit card debt. This can make it harder to save, invest, and achieve financial freedom.

Health Disparities: This community experiences more financial strain due to higher rates of chronic health conditions. These lead to unexpected medical expenses and shorter life expectancies, both of which impact financial planning needs.

Why African Americans Are Ideal Clients for Financial Advisors

Despite these challenges, African Americans represent an ideal and underserved client base for financial advisors, highlighting the importance of diversity in financial advising. Many within the community exhibit remarkable motivation, resilience, and a strong desire to improve their financial standing. This drive is reflected in their growing participation in homeownership, entrepreneurship, and wealth-building initiatives.

Moreover, African Americans are increasingly prioritizing financial literacy, saving for retirement, and building generational wealth. Financial advisors who embrace diversity in financial advising and take the time to demonstrate cultural competency can build meaningful relationships, establish trust, and better serve the unique needs of this community.

Buying Power: African Americans are on track to have a buying power exceeding $1.8 trillion in 2026. This economic growth underscores the importance of tailored financial advising for the black community.

Growing Representation: The Black and African American community represents 14% of the population, which is an increase of 30% since 2000. This community is growing, with nearly half of Black Americans under 30. And they are steadily building wealth.

High Value on Education: African American families often view education as a path to upward mobility. This focus extends to seeking professional financial guidance to achieve personal and family goals.

Desire for Tailored Solutions: African Americans appreciate financial advisors who understand their unique needs and challenges. Personalized financial plans foster trust and encourage long-term partnerships.

Entrepreneurial Spirit: African Americans have a strong inclination toward entrepreneurship. 13% of Black Americans say owning a business is an important goal, compared to just 4% of the general population. Many need business financial advice, making them a rewarding client base for advisors specializing in black financial advice.

Focused on Saving: A recent report shows that affluent Black Americans have outpaced the general population when it comes to saving money. And 94% have a financial plan, compared to 91% of the general population.

Strategies for Financial Advisors to Engage African American Clients

Financial advisors can effectively serve African American clients by adopting culturally aware strategies. This begins with recognizing the historical and systemic factors that have shaped financial disparities, as well as the specific challenges clients may face.

By incorporating strategies that respect cultural values, addressing concerns with transparency, and tailoring financial advice to align with their client's goals, advisors can build stronger, more meaningful connections.

Cultural Competency: Learn about the historical and social factors that influence African American financial behaviors. Invest in diversity training and seek resources to better understand the black community's financial experiences.

Community Engagement: Build trust by participating in community events and partnering with African American organizations. Offer free workshops focused on black financial planning and financial literacy.

Representation Matters: Diversify your team to include black financial advisors. This can help clients connect more deeply and see relatable perspectives.

Holistic Approach: Provide comprehensive services that address debt management, investment planning, estate planning, and philanthropy. Tailored solutions should integrate African American financial planning principles.

Effective Communication: Be clear, transparent, and proactive. Many African American clients value advisors who take time to explain financial concepts in simple and accessible ways.

Expanding Access to Financial Services

Expanding access to financial services for African American communities means addressing historical inequities and designing solutions that meet their needs. This includes offering services in underserved areas, promoting financial literacy programs, and creating financial products that align with their goals.

Financial Literacy Initiatives: Create workshops and online resources about budgeting, saving, and investing. Highlight African American financial planning strategies to close knowledge gaps.

Community-Based Solutions: Partner with local organizations to provide financial services and advice tailored to the black community.

Innovative Products: Develop financial products that address common challenges, such as student loan refinancing or affordable insurance plans.

Conclusion: Building a Brighter Financial Future

Financial advisors have an incredible opportunity to make a lasting impact within the African American community by embracing diversity in financial advising. Advisors can help clients succeed financially by understanding their challenges and creating tailored solutions for their specific needs. Building trust is crucial in this process, as it helps clients create lasting legacies and achieve their financial goals.

The African American population's growing economic influence and commitment to financial growth make them a dynamic and rewarding group to serve. Advisors who prioritize diversity in financial advising and embrace this opportunity will not only expand their business but also contribute to economic equity and social justice. Focusing on financial advice for African Americans fosters stronger connections, empowers clients, and drives meaningful change within the community.

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Understanding Mental Health in Black Communities

The topic of mental health is often taboo in Black communities. If we eliminate this stigma, can we help people get the mental health care they need?

What happens at the intersection of mental health and one's experience as a member of the Black community? While the experience of being Black in America varies tremendously, there are shared cultural factors that play a role in helping define mental health and supporting well-being, resiliency and healing.

Parts of this shared cultural experience — family connections, values, expression through spirituality or music, reliance on community and religious networks — are enriching and can be great sources of strength and support.

However, another part of this shared experience – being subject to racism, discrimination and inequity- can significantly affect a person's mental health. Being treated or perceived as "less than" because of the color of your skin can be stressful and even traumatizing. Additionally, members of the Black community face structural challenges accessing the care and treatment they need.

According to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, Black adults in the U.S. are more likely than white adults to report persistent symptoms of emotional distress, such as sadness and feeling like everything is an effort. Black adults living below the poverty line are more than twice as likely to report serious psychological distress than those with more financial security.

Despite the needs, only one in three Black adults with mental illness receive treatment. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Mental Health Facts for African Americans guide, they are also:

- Less likely to receive guideline-consistent care
- Less frequently included in research
- More likely to use emergency rooms or primary care (rather than mental health specialists)

Cutting Through the Stigma: NAMI and The Confess Project

Barriers To Mental Health Care

Socioeconomic Disparities: Socioeconomic factors can make treatment options less available. In 2020, 10.4% of Black adults in the U.S. had no form of health insurance.

The Black community, like other communities of color, are more likely to experience socioeconomic disparities such as exclusion from health, educational, social and economic resources. These disparities may contribute to worse mental health outcomes.

Stigma: Negative attitudes and beliefs towards people who live with mental health conditions is pervasive within the U.S. and can be particularly strong within the Black community. Although beliefs and attitudes vary, research shows that many Black adults – especially older adults – view mental health conditions as a consequence of personal weakness. As a result, people may experience shame about having a mental illness and worry that they may be discriminated against due to their condition.

For many in the Black community, it can be incredibly challenging to discuss the topic of mental health due to how they may be perceived by others. This fear could prevent people from seeking mental health care when they really need it.

Additionally, many people choose to seek support from their faith community rather than seeking a medical diagnosis. In many Black communities in the U.S., the church, mosque or other faith institution can play a central role as a meeting place and source of strength.

Faith and spirituality can help in the recovery process and be an important part of a treatment plan. For example, spiritual leaders and faith communities can provide support and reduce isolation. However, they should not be the only option for people whose daily functioning is impaired by mental health symptoms.

Provider Bias and Inequality of Care

Black people have historically been negatively affected by prejudice and discrimination in the health care system in the US. Unfortunately, many Black people still have these negative experiences when they attempt to seek treatment. Provider bias, both conscious and unconscious, and a lack of cultural competency can result in misdiagnosis and inadequate treatment. This ultimately can lead to mistrust of mental health professionals and create a barrier for many to engage in treatment.

Black people may also be more likely to identify and describe physical symptoms related to mental health problems. For example, they may describe bodily aches and pains when talking about depression. A health care provider who is not culturally competent might not recognize these as symptoms of a mental health condition. Additionally, Black individuals are more likely to receive a misdiagnosis of schizophrenia when expressing symptoms related to mood disorders.

How To Seek Culturally Competent Care

When a person is experiencing challenges with their mental health, it is essential for them to receive quality care as soon as the symptoms are recognized. It is equally important that the

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care they receive is provided by culturally competent health care professionals.

While we recommend seeking help from a mental health professional, a primary care professional is also a great place to start. A primary care professional might be able to provide an initial mental health assessment and referral to a mental health professional if needed. Community and faith organizations may also have a list of available mental health providers in your area.

When meeting with a provider, it can be helpful to ask questions to get a sense of their level of cultural awareness. Providers expect and welcome questions from their patients or clients, since this helps them better understand what is important in their treatment. Here are some sample questions:

- Have you treated other Black people or received training in cultural competence for Black mental health? If not, how do you plan to provide me with culturally sensitive, patient-centered care?
- How do you see our cultural backgrounds influencing our communication and my treatment?
- Do you use a different approach in your treatment when working with patients from different cultural backgrounds?
- What is your current understanding of differences in health outcomes for Black patients?

Whether you seek help from a primary care professional or a mental health professional, you should finish your sessions with the health care professional feeling heard and respected. You may want to ask yourself:

- Did my provider communicate effectively with me?
- Is my provider willing to integrate my beliefs, practices, identity and cultural background into my treatment plan?
- Did I feel like I was treated with respect and dignity?
- Do I feel like my provider understands and relates well with me?

The relationship and communication between a person and their mental health provider is a key aspect of treatment. It's very important for a person to feel that their identity is understood by their provider in order to receive the best possible support and care.

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PROSPERU BROADENS FINANCIAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH, ADULTS AND ENTREPRENEURS

From budgeting basics to home and business ownership

-- By Jeanene Dunn, TCB Magazine

ProsperU's mission is straightforward: help people make smarter money decisions. Over the past two years, the Central Bank financial education program has expanded how it delivers that message.

Under ProsperU Director Tracy Rainge's leadership, the program has broadened its reach to serve children, teens, adults, homebuyers and aspiring entrepreneurs with practical lessons on personal finance.

What began as a financial literacy initiative has grown into a more flexible program that adapts its content to the audience, whether participants are learning the basics of saving, managing debt, or preparing to buy a home or launch a business.

"We've catered our content to resonate with whatever audience we're speaking to," Rainge said. "That has been one of the biggest changes over the last two years."

Meeting people where they are financially

That audience-specific approach has shaped much of ProsperU's recent growth. The program now offers lessons for younger children on earning, saving and spending. Teen programming includes simulation activities that show how quickly a paycheck can disappear once rent, groceries, transportation and other expenses come into play.

Adult classes remain focused on budgeting, debt, credit and homeownership, but Rainge said those sessions have also changed to reflect the financial strain many households face today.

Over the past two years, ProsperU has:

- Expanded youth programming for children and teens
- Added simulation activities to help teens understand real-world budgeting
- Refined adult classes on budgeting, debt and credit
- Strengthened homebuyer education with free community sessions
- Prepared new classes focused on small business education, savings and investing

One of the clearest examples of that shift is the way ProsperU now teaches budgeting. Rainge said the traditional 50/30/20 formula — which suggests spending 50% of income on needs, 30% on wants and 20% on savings — can still be a useful guide, but it often does not reflect today's economic realities. ProsperU now uses a five-part budget allocation model that makes room for debt repayment alongside essentials and savings.

"We've had to adjust because life has adjusted," she said.

Financial education that leads to action

Rainge said one of ProsperU's most meaningful success stories involves a veteran who came to the program while experiencing homelessness. The client was also deeply distrustful of traditional banks. He was using another financial product to hold his savings and did not see a bank as part of his financial future.

Rainge, a certified credit counselor, worked with him to establish a relationship with Central Bank, where he opened a secured credit card, savings account and certificate of deposit. Over time, her client strengthened his credit score by showing more on-time payments, built his banking history, and ultimately, qualified for a loan to buy a home.

For Rainge, the story captures what ProsperU is designed to do: help people understand financial systems well enough to use them to their advantage.

KiJedah Warmsley helps lead ProsperU's next chapter

As ProsperU grows, KiJedah Warmsley, ProsperU program coordinator at Central Bank, is helping shape the program's next phase.

Warmsley transitioned into financial literacy education after seven years in financial product marketing. She holds the Securities Industry Essentials (SIE), Series 6 and Series 63 licenses. These are professional credentials that demonstrate knowledge of investment products, securities regulations and ethical practices in the financial services industry. Her background allows her to help participants better understand investing, retirement planning and the financial decisions that support long-term wealth.

Warmsley transitioned into financial literacy education after seven years in financial product marketing. She said the move allowed her to focus less on selling products and more on helping people understand the decisions that can strengthen their financial future.

"I wanted to do more than just sell products," Warmsley said. "I wanted to help people understand what to do with their money and how to make decisions that can really change their situation."

Beginning this fall, Warmsley will lead ProsperU classes focused on small business education, including establishing an LLC, understanding business financing and using personal credit-building strategies to support entrepreneurship.

"A lot of people have the idea or the passion for a business, but they don't always know what financial steps need to happen first," she said. "If we can help them understand how to structure the business, how to think about funding and how their personal credit can affect that process, then we're giving them a stronger foundation."

Helping ProsperU students think long term

ProsperU is also expanding its work in savings and investing education, an area both Rainge and Warmsley see as increasingly important.

Warmsley said too many people are focused on quick financial wins instead of long-term stability.

"We've gotten used to wanting quick results," she said. "But when it comes to building wealth, you have to think long term. You have to think about retirement, about what you're putting away now and how that money can work for you later."

Rainge said ProsperU's investing classes are designed to help people better understand the terms and tools that often make investing feel intimidating, from Roth IRAs and mutual funds to retirement and education savings accounts. She also wants participants to understand the difference between the stock market and the broader economy so they can make better-informed decisions.

"There's so much information out there, and not all of it is good," Warmsley said. "People hear about stocks or investing and think it's just about making money fast, but we want them to understand the bigger picture — stability, planning and preparing for the future."

Building confidence through education

Homebuyer education has also become a larger part of ProsperU's work. Rainge said the program recently offered a free homebuyer education series that drew 25 to 30 people per session and covered budgeting, expenses, working with loan officers and preparing for the mortgage process.

The next step is a public savings and investing session through the Grateful Education Foundation, building on the momentum of the homebuyer series.

For Rainge and Warmsley, ProsperU's work comes down to helping people feel more informed and more confident about the decisions in front of them, whether that means creating a household budget, improving credit, buying a home, starting a business or planning for retirement.

"If people can walk away feeling more confident and more informed than when they came in, that's the win," Warmsley said. "Sometimes all it takes is someone breaking it down in a way that makes sense and showing you that these goals are actually possible."

To learn more about upcoming ProsperU classes or enroll in a session, visit Central Bank's ProsperU Kansas City page at **https://events.centralbank.net/prosperu/kansas-city**.

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CLARK'S BEAUTY SUPPLY MOVES TO NEW RAYTOWN HOME

Stop on by. The shopping is divine.
By Jeanene Dunn, TCB Magazine

The energy inside Clark's Beauty Supply made one thing clear: the business's new Raytown location is already doing what Regina Clark hoped it would. Increase the foot traffic.

"To grow our customer base, we needed more people to be able to find us," Clark said.

Clark's Beauty Supply recently relocated to 11525 E. 63rd St., next to Dollar General in the Woodson Village Shopping Center at 63rd Street and Woodson Road. Since its grand reopening in June, customers have been stopping in regularly to shop, browse, pick up orders and connect with Clark and her staff.

There is so much to see when you walk into the store. If you are into wigs, hairpieces and braids, Clark's has you covered and then some. They have a nice supply of hair care products, bags, jewelry, makeup, clothes and tons of lipsticks and lip glosses in all kinds of colors.

Clark also sells some beautiful designer outfits. And she has the church ladies covered with the suits and fabulous hats to match! What she doesn't have in stock, she can order.

Staying power in a difficult industry

With 13 years in the beauty supply business and many more running other businesses, Clark knows growth takes more than a good location. It also takes persistence.

She has built Clark's Beauty Supply in an industry that remains challenging for Black-owned beauty supply businesses.

"It hasn't changed," Clark says. The Black hair care supply market continues to be dominated by people who don't look like me or understand us as customers," she said. "And they don't treat us well."

Clark believes her business has remained strong because she knows her customers, understands the products she sells, and has built a trusted team and loyal customer base over the years.

"We are not a large superstore, but we know what our customers want and show them care and respect," she said. "If we don't have a product in stock that they want, we can get it for them. We lead with different energy."

Leading with a heart for service and care

Clark and her team exude such positive energy and a love for serving customers. Their customer-centered and very personable approach is part of what sets the business apart.

Second, the prices reasonable. On a recent trip for this story, I purchased several lip glosses, a couple of pairs of earrings, a hair care product and a few fragrances. I spent less than $30.

“I am in business to make money, but I am also in this business to help people and not price gouge,” Clark said. “I’m not going to charge $500 for a $200 piece,” she continued. “And then treat them poorly. It’s just not okay.”

Clark’s real passion is wigs and hairpieces. And they are a staple of the business.

They’re also a huge draw for potential shoppers walking by the store. There’s hair of every type, texture, length and color adorning the walls, and it pulls people in to take a closer look.

Clark on why we must support Black-owned businesses

As we wrapped up our conversation, Clark spoke candidly about the need to support Black-owned businesses. “We can’t survive and thrive without the community’s support,” she said. “It’s so important for us as a community to do this.”

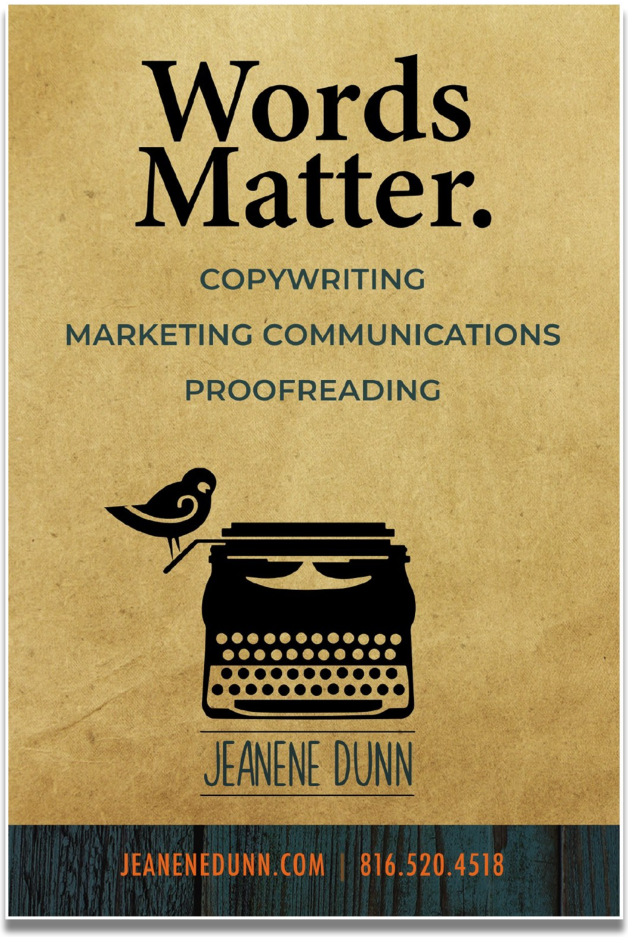
She is also intentional about working with other Black-owned small businesses. “I work with these vendors and carry some of their products in the store. We are always looking for people to work with.”

For Clark, the move is about more than a new address. It is about creating room to grow and continuing to serve her customers with warmth, knowledge, care and community.

Shop Clark’s Beauty Supply today

Clark’s Beauty Supply is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The phone number is 816-326-8304.

Follow Clark’s Beauty Supply on Facebook and Instagram for store updates, new arrivals and more information.



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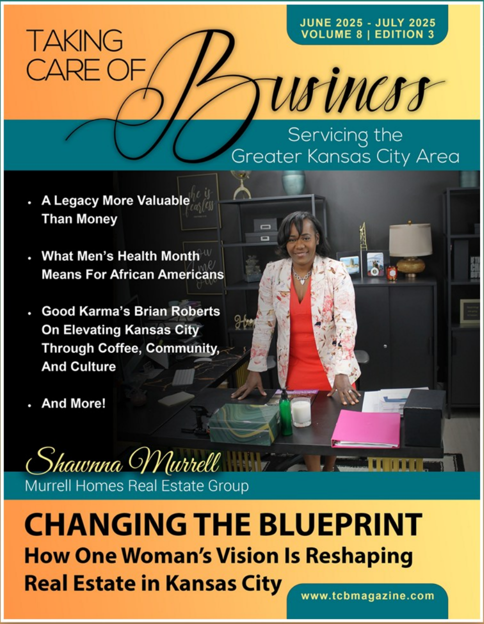

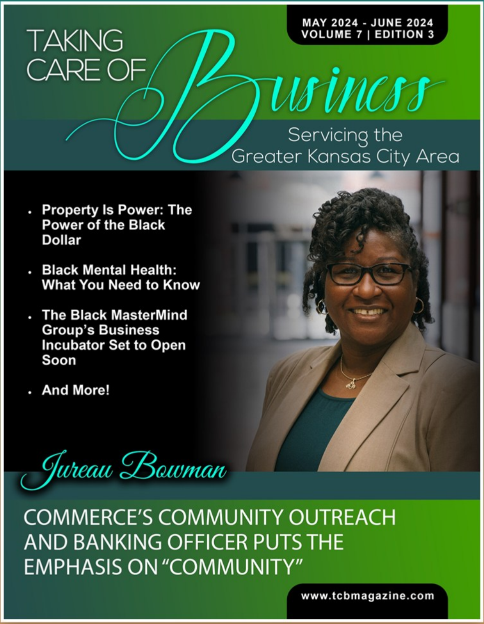

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