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OCT 2026 - NOV 2026
VOLUME 9 | EDITION 5

Business

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LeAndra & Robert Elijah

Divine Eats and Treats Builds A Family Legacy While Serving Comfort Food With Faith and Purpose

ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **Together We Rise: The Path to Financial Empowerment**
- **Prioritizing Black Health and Wellness**
- **How To Support Black Owned Businesses As Pressure Mounts Under Trump**
- **And Much More Inside!**

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Servicing the Greater Kansas City Area

CHIEF EDITOR

Saleem Rasheed, Jr.

PHOTO EDITOR

Randy Williams

CONTENT MANAGEMENT

Jeanene Dunn

GRAPHICS LAYOUT

DeMont Perry

Digital Media Partners

WEBSITE

www.tcbmagazine.com

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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 distribute 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 companies 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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Saleem Rasheed, Jr.
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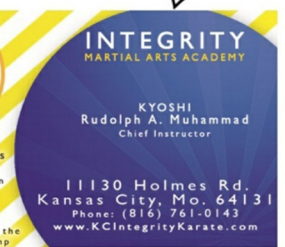
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Together We Rise: The Path to Financial Empowerment

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”— Nelson Mandela

Financial success is often measured by the visible markers of prosperity—luxury cars, sprawling homes, designer clothes, and lavish lifestyles. These are the symbols that many people associate with wealth, serving as both status symbols and goals for many individuals striving for financial achievement. However, for Black Americans, particularly in today's society, there's an overlooked aspect of financial success that is far more critical yet remains unseen: the quiet, often invisible, accumulation of wealth through financial education, literacy, and informed decision-making.

This involves understanding the importance of budgeting, saving, and investing wisely to build a secure financial future. It includes learning about the stock market, real estate opportunities, retirement planning, and the power of compound interest. By focusing on these foundational elements, individuals can create generational wealth that goes beyond mere appearances, ensuring long-term stability and economic empowerment for themselves and their families.

The Foundation of Financial Education

Financial education is the cornerstone of any successful financial strategy. It's the process through which individuals gain comprehensive knowledge about how money works, how to manage it effectively, and how to make it grow over time. Through financial education, people learn about budgeting, saving, investing, credit management, and the principles of wealth accumulation. For Black Americans, the importance of financial education cannot be overstated. Historically marginalized and systematically excluded from many financial opportunities due to discriminatory practices, Black Americans have faced unique challenges in building and maintaining wealth.

The legacy of redlining, unequal access to quality education, and employment discrimination have contributed to a significant

wealth gap. Addressing these challenges requires intentional efforts toward financial empowerment.

“When you're on a mission and you have a passion, you don't pay attention to what you've done—you focus on what's still ahead.”— Jana Woodhouse, CPA, New York City, NY

Jana Woodhouse broke barriers as one of the first Black American women to be licensed on Wall Street in the 1980s, paving the way for future generations. Her powerful message is a reminder that financial literacy isn't a box to check—it's an ongoing journey of empowerment and growth. Her unwavering commitment to underserved communities embodies the core mission of WealthWave: to ensure that financial success is accessible to everyone, regardless of their background.



Financial education empowers individuals to understand the complexities of saving, investing, and planning for the future. It equips them with the tools needed to navigate the financial system, from understanding interest rates and retirement accounts to evaluating investment opportunities and building a diversified portfolio. It's the first step in a journey toward financial literacy, which enables people to make informed decisions that can secure their financial future and break the cycle of economic disadvantage. By fostering financial literacy, individuals and communities can build a more equitable future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive financially.

Financial Literacy: The Key to Informed Decisions

Once financial education lays the groundwork, the next step is to achieve financial literacy. It's about knowing the difference between assets and liabilities and recognizing the power of compound interest, which can significantly increase savings over time when left to grow.

"This isn't a black or white thing, it's a green thing."—James Wilkerson, CFP, CFEd, Tampa, FL

James Wilkerson, a 20-year U.S. Navy officer and respected pastor, has championed financial literacy as a critical tool for empowerment. In many TV interviews, he has conveyed a powerful message: our mission is to equip individuals with the knowledge and resources necessary to make informed choices and reach their financial objectives. Our education-centric approach distinguishes us from conventional financial institutions and guides you toward genuine financial freedom.

As a prominent advocate for financial education and Certified Financial Educator®, James calls on Black Americans to take control of their financial futures by actively engaging with their finances. His words inspire a call to action—to keep learning, ask bold questions, and pursue the financial knowledge that will open doors to lasting wealth and success in an ever-changing economic landscape.

Informed decision-making is a critical component of financial literacy. It's about understanding the risks and rewards of different financial strategies, from conservative savings plans to more aggressive investment portfolios, and making choices that align with your long-term goals and personal circumstances. For Black Americans, this can mean rejecting the allure of instant gratification—such as unnecessary spending on luxury items—in favor of long-term wealth accumulation and financial security. This choice is not always visible to others, as it often involves behind-the-scenes planning and discipline, but its impact can resonate throughout generations, creating a legacy of financial stability and prosperity.

The Invisibility of Wealth: A Double-Edged Sword

Herein lies a paradox: The wealth that is built through financial education, literacy, and informed decision-making is often invisible to others. When you choose to save and invest your money for the future, rather than spending it on visible symbols of success, your financial achievements are hidden from the world. This invisibility is both a blessing and a challenge, reflecting the delicate balance between private success and public perception.

On the one hand, this invisibility can be empowering. It means that your financial success is yours alone, protected from the judgment, envy, and sometimes the pressure to conform to soci-

etal norms that others might impose on you. It's about securing your future quietly and confidently, charting a course that is true to your values and long-term aspirations.



"Success isn't about how much money you make; it's about the difference you make in people's lives."— Michelle Obama, Global Advocate for Education and Former U.S. First Lady

By focusing on financial security rather than outward displays of wealth, you can make a profound difference in your own life and the lives of those around you. You can invest in experiences that enrich your life, nurture relationships, and build a legacy that extends beyond material possessions.

On the other hand, the invisibility of wealth can sometimes feel isolating. In a society that often values what it can see, the decision to prioritize financial security over visible luxuries can be misunderstood. Friends, family, and coworkers may not see the financial fortress you are building—they only see what you choose not to buy. This can lead to questions or even doubts about your lifestyle choices, sometimes casting a shadow over the quiet satisfaction of financial independence. Yet, it is important to remember that the true worth of your efforts lies in the stability and opportunities you create for your future, and that of your loved ones. By navigating these challenges, you lay the foundations for a life of substance and meaning that transcends superficial measures of success.

Leading by Example: The Importance of Financial Role Models

The Together We Rise campaign is committed to tackling the distinct financial challenges experienced by Black Americans by

equipping them with the necessary financial education to overcome these hurdles. This mission demands strong leadership. In today's ever-evolving financial landscape, having a financial role model can be a game-changer in shaping your financial future. Here are additional examples of inspiring leaders who have paved the way for others.

“Financial freedom is not about being flashy; it’s about being free. It’s about knowing that whether you live a long time, die young, or get sick in the middle, your finances are ready to support you.”— Marico Walker, Financial Educator, Jacksonville, FL

Financial Educators like Marico Walker stand at the forefront of this movement, serving not just as advocates but as champions of financial empowerment, particularly within the Black American community. Marico’s relentless dedication highlights the power of making smart financial decisions, positioning them as the foundation for lasting success. His message is clear: once you develop a financial plan, commit to it with steadfast determination, because that consistency is what drives true transformation.

Marico, a former Master Certified Automotive Technician for Mercedes-Benz, introduces the transformative "7 Money Milestones," a roadmap designed to lead individuals to financial stability and security. These milestones cover essential steps, including building a strong emergency fund, aggressively eliminating debt, and investing wisely for future growth. He emphasizes that reaching these milestones is just the beginning—the key to long-term success lies in maintaining them with discipline and never losing sight of the financial goals that ensure lasting prosperity.

“Financial freedom isn’t a privilege—it’s a right. It’s time we rewrite the rules so that every individual, no matter their background, has the knowledge and tools to secure their own future.”— Lester Baron, Financial Educator, Los Angeles, CA

Lester Baron, a former materials testing technician, is on a mission to transform financial literacy from an abstract concept into a powerful tool for empowerment, especially within underserved communities. His belief that financial education is the foundation of long-term success drives his efforts to make financial knowledge accessible to all. Through his work with WealthWave, Lester focuses on breaking down the barriers that have historically excluded many Black Americans from wealth-building opportunities. He advocates for practical, actionable steps that enable individuals to take control of their financial futures, ensuring that financial literacy is no longer a privilege for the few, but a pathway to prosperity for everyone.

“True independence starts with financial empowerment. When women master their finances, they gain the power to

shape not just their own futures, but the futures of generations to come.”— Kirsten Baron, Financial Educator - Los Angeles, CA

Kirsten Baron, a former social worker, is a passionate advocate for women's financial literacy, believing that empowering women with financial knowledge is the key to creating lasting change in communities. Her mission is to break the cycle of financial dependency by equipping women with the tools to confidently manage their money, build wealth, and secure their futures. Through her work with WealthWave, Kirsten focuses on educating women about the importance of financial knowledge, investing, and long-term wealth-building strategies, ensuring that financial independence can become a reality for women from all walks of life. She is committed to reshaping the narrative around women and wealth, empowering them to take control of their financial destinies.

Leaders like Jana, James, Marico, Lester, and Kirsten play an indispensable role in shifting perceptions about financial success. They advocate for the understanding that true financial success transcends outward appearances; it's fundamentally about knowledge and strategic planning. Through their leadership and advocacy, they are inspiring others to seize control of their financial futures, challenging societal expectations and assumptions. By providing a blueprint for financial literacy and empowerment, they pave the way for a more financially secure and confident generation. Their influence is a testament to the power of leading by example, demonstrating that financial expertise and foresight are attainable for all, regardless of background or circumstance.

This campaign underscores the significance of financial literacy, offering customized resources and strategies to pave the way for economic empowerment and equality. Acknowledging historical and systemic barriers that have hindered wealth accumulation in Black communities, WealthWave is committed to breaking the cycle of disparity through comprehensive educational initiatives and personalized guidance. The goal is to nurture informed financial decision-making and foster a future where Black Americans can confidently build generational wealth and achieve financial independence.

A Call to Action: Secure Your Wealth

The time is now for Black Americans to embrace the transformative power of building wealth. In today's rapidly changing world, it's essential to prioritize financial education and achieve financial literacy—a crucial step in making the decisions that will secure your future and that of generations to come. Understand that the wealth you build quietly, out of the public eye, is far more valuable than the fleeting admiration that accompanies visible luxuries and material possessions. This invisible wealth is

your true legacy, providing stability and opportunities that extend beyond your own lifetime.



“You are responsible for your life. You can’t keep blaming somebody else for your dysfunction. Life is really about moving on.”— Oprah Winfrey, CEO of the Oprah Winfrey Network

Moving on means releasing the need for external validation, focusing instead on achieving financial independence. It means advancing with the confidence that your wealth is secure, even if it remains unseen by others. This is about harnessing control over your financial destiny and ensuring that your resources are allocated thoughtfully.

Take the necessary action today. Invest time in educating yourself and achieving financial literacy. Seek out resources, attend workshops or Zooms, and engage in discussions that elevate your understanding of financial matters. Additionally, consult with a financial professional who can offer guidance tailored to your unique situation, ensuring that your money is working as diligently for you as you do to earn it. By quietly building your financial fortress, you secure peace of mind, knowing that come what may, you are prepared and resilient.

Your future is in your hands—establish it, secure it, and ensure it endures. This is not just a call to action but an invitation to transform how we perceive and manage our wealth. Embrace the long-term advantages of financial strategy and see your wealth become the cornerstone of a prosperous future.

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Prioritizing Black Health *and Wellness*

Black health and wellness is an essential and multifaceted topic that encompasses physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being within Black communities. It reflects not only individual health outcomes but also the broader systems and environments that influence access to care, quality of treatment, and long-term wellness. Understanding Black health requires looking at both personal habits and the structural factors that shape health experiences across generations.

Historically, Black communities have faced significant disparities in healthcare access and outcomes. These disparities are rooted in systemic inequalities, including limited access to quality medical facilities, economic challenges, and historical mistrust of healthcare institutions. These factors have contributed to higher rates of chronic illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease within Black populations.

Addressing Black health and wellness begins with acknowledging these systemic challenges while also empowering individuals with knowledge and resources. Education about preventive care, nutrition, and regular medical checkups plays a crucial role in improving health outcomes. When individuals are equipped with information, they are better able to make informed decisions about their health.

Nutrition is a key component of overall wellness. Access to fresh, healthy foods can vary widely depending on location and economic conditions. Many communities face limited access to grocery stores that offer nutritious options, which can contribute to poor dietary habits. Promoting balanced diets that include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains is essential for long-term health.

Physical activity is another important aspect of wellness.

Regular exercise helps reduce the risk of chronic diseases, improves mental health, and enhances overall quality of life. Community-based fitness programs, safe recreational spaces, and culturally relevant wellness initiatives can encourage more people to incorporate movement into their daily routines.

Mental health is an equally critical part of the conversation around Black wellness.

For many years, mental health has been stigmatized within various communities, leading to underdiagnosis and lack of treatment. Increasing awareness and normalizing conversations about mental health can help individuals seek the support they need without fear or judgment.



Access to culturally competent healthcare providers is also vital. When patients feel understood and respected, they are more likely to engage in their care and follow medical advice. Healthcare professionals who are aware of cultural nuances and historical contexts can provide more effective and compassionate treatment.

Community support systems play a powerful role in promoting wellness. Churches, local organizations, and grassroots initiatives often serve as trusted sources of information and care. These institutions can help bridge gaps in access by offering health screenings, educational programs, and support networks.

Another important aspect of Black health and wellness is addressing environmental factors. Living conditions, exposure to pollutants, and neighborhood safety all influence health outcomes. Advocating for healthier environments and equitable policies can lead to meaningful improvements in community well-being.

Preventive care is one of the most effective ways to improve health outcomes. Regular screenings, early detection of illnesses, and consistent medical follow-ups can significantly reduce the impact of many diseases. Encouraging routine healthcare visits helps shift the focus from treatment to prevention.



Representation in healthcare and wellness industries also matters. Seeing Black professionals in medicine, fitness, and mental health fields can inspire trust and encourage individuals to seek care. Representation helps ensure that diverse perspectives are included in health research and decision-making.

Ultimately, Black health and wellness is about creating a future where individuals and communities can thrive. It requires a combination of personal responsibility, community engagement, and systemic change. By addressing both individual behaviors and broader inequalities, it is possible to build a more equitable and healthier society for future generations.



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Divine Eats and Treats builds a family legacy

While serving comfort food with faith and purpose.

By Jeanene Dunn



Faith and service are central to Leandra Elijah's life. These values also shape how she operates Divine Eats and Treats, the food truck she and her husband Robert own.

Leandra had dreamed of owning a business since her teens. She and Robert previously operated a barbecue restaurant and continue to provide catering services, but she wanted a venture that reflected her own vision.

When Robert suggested adding a food truck, Leandra wasn't sure. She went to where she knew best – she prayed about the idea.

"I asked God for direction and a name. He gave me Divine Eats and Treats," she said.

The name reflects the business's purpose: serving others. Leandra sees serving food as her calling to care for people.

"I consider myself a servant leader," she said. "And I want to be in service. That is my calling."

Good food made with love, care, and value

Robert, an experienced pitmaster, prepares the truck's smoked meats using his own seasonings and house-made sauces. The carnival-style menu offers something for customers seeking a full meal, quick snack, dessert, or cold drink.

Menu items include:

- **Burgers, chicken sandwiches, hot dogs and chili dogs**
- **Wings, fries and nachos**
- **Funnel cakes and deep-fried Oreos**
- **Lemonade, shaved ice and slushies**
- **Rotating specials such as ribs and brisket**

For the Elijahs, good food also means providing value. Rising food and fuel costs have led to modest price increases, but Leandra remains mindful of what customers can afford.

"Our prices are really, really low, and we give good portions in a

time right now where we're paying more and getting less," she said. "We put our soul in this. This isn't just putting something together. This food is love."

Growing into the business

The Elijahs started Divine Eats and Treats with a smaller truck they purchased "for little or nothing." Two years later, they upgraded to a larger truck that allows the entire team to work inside. They also became more efficient with experience.

A dependable group of family and friends has worked in the business for years. Their team includes Leandra's twin sister, daughter, son-in-law, close friends, and 14-year-old granddaughter.

"We all were learning, and now we have a system, and everyone has a role to play," Leandra said. "It's not chaotic and we function like a well-oiled machine. My granddaughter makes sure our social media accounts stay updated, so customers know where to find us."



"They have been so loyal," she added. "It is such a blessing to have good people."

That system helps the Elijahs balance the business with their full-time jobs. "We mostly work on weekends," she explained. "But we do work some weekdays if we are scheduled to be at an event."

They prepare days before an event. Robert marinates, seasons and smokes the meats, while LeAndra shops, checks inventory, organizes the trailer and oversees service.

Building their customer base

Divine Eats and Treats operates from late March or early April through October, depending on the weather. The truck serves at community events, school functions and church gatherings.

Customers follow the truck on TikTok, Facebook and Instagram. Word of mouth also generates repeat business. Former customers contact LeAndra to ask where the truck will be, while churches and other organizations invite the team back for additional events.

Sometimes growth requires LeAndra to push past her own doubts. When she considered asking a Walmart manager for permission to park on the store's lot, she expected to hear no.

"I was like, they are not going to let us park this truck on their property," she recalled. She went in and asked anyway.

The manager not only approved her request but also offered the truck a prominent location near the store's entrance.

Creating something that lasts

Running the business involves more than preparing and selling

meals. It requires learning what is needed to get the business up and running.

That process involved securing required licenses, obtaining permits, and receiving permission to operate at events and on private property. She and Robert also sought advice from restaurant-industry friends, observed other food truck owners and asked a lot of questions along the way.

LeAndra encourages aspiring entrepreneurs to understand those requirements and commit fully to the work. "There will be ups and downs and challenges," she said. "But you just still have to push through."

Her long-term goal reaches beyond the next event or food truck season. LeAndra and Robert are creating a family legacy.

"I want to pass the business down to our children and grandchildren to continue to build," she said.

Support Divine Eats and Treats

The Divine Eats and Treats food truck operates seasonally, between March and October. Follow Divine Eats and Treats on Facebook, TikTok and Instagram to view the menu, locate their food truck, book them for an event or at a venue, or request catering services.

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How To Support Black-Owned Businesses As Pressure Mounts Under Trump

Black-owned small businesses are facing new economic pressures during President Donald Trump's second term, as changes to federal programs, government contracting and trade policy reshape the business environment.

But many Black-owned businesses were already operating with fewer resources before Trump returned to office.

A 2024 report from Third Way and the Alliance for Entrepreneurial Equity found that 97% of Black-owned employer businesses had fewer than 20 employees, while three-quarters had fewer than five.

The report also found that 40% of Black-owned businesses were completely denied loans, lines of credit or cash advances, compared with 18% of white-owned businesses.

Some of the changes under Trump are adding to those challenges.

In 2025, the Trump administration moved to scale back the Minority Business Development Agency, the federal agency that provides resources and support to minority-owned businesses. A March 2025 executive order directed the agency to reduce its functions and personnel to the minimum required by law.

Federal contracting has also changed under Trump. In February 2025, the Small Business Administration (SBA) returned the federal contracting goal for small disadvantaged businesses to the statutory minimum of 5%, after the Biden administration had set a goal of reaching 15% by fiscal year 2025, according to the SBA. The agency's 8(a) Business Development Program, which helps socially and economically disadvantaged businesses compete for federal contracts, has also undergone changes under Trump.

For some Black-owned business owners, those changes have already affected their bottom lines.

Axios reported that Nicole Turner, a Black-owned business owner whose consulting company has relied on federal contracts, estimated she was losing \$15,000 to \$20,000 a month because of reduced federal contracts and fewer requests for proposals.

Tariffs have created another source of pressure, particularly for some Black-owned beauty businesses.

Reuters reported that Georgia salon owner Dajiah Blackshear-Calloway saw the price of a package of hair imported from Vietnam rise from \$190 to \$290. Hair glue imported from China increased from \$8 to \$14.99 a bottle. Blackshear-Calloway said she has had to either absorb those higher costs or pass them on to customers.

While consumers cannot solve those larger economic and policy issues on their own, they can still support Black-owned businesses.



How To Support Black-Owned Businesses

Make them your first choice. When you're looking for a product or service, take a moment to see whether a Black-owned business offers what you need. That could mean ordering from a local restaurant, booking a hairstylist or hiring a Black-owned accountant, photographer, contractor or caterer.

Keep coming back. A one-time purchase is helpful, but becoming a regular customer can provide a small business with more dependable revenue.

Tell people about your experience. Robert F. Smith, founder of the Fund II Foundation, encourages consumers to recommend Black-owned businesses to friends and family. Sharing a business with people you know or on social media can help introduce it to potential customers.

Leave a review. A positive review on Google, Yelp or another platform can help a business build credibility and make it easier for new customers to find.

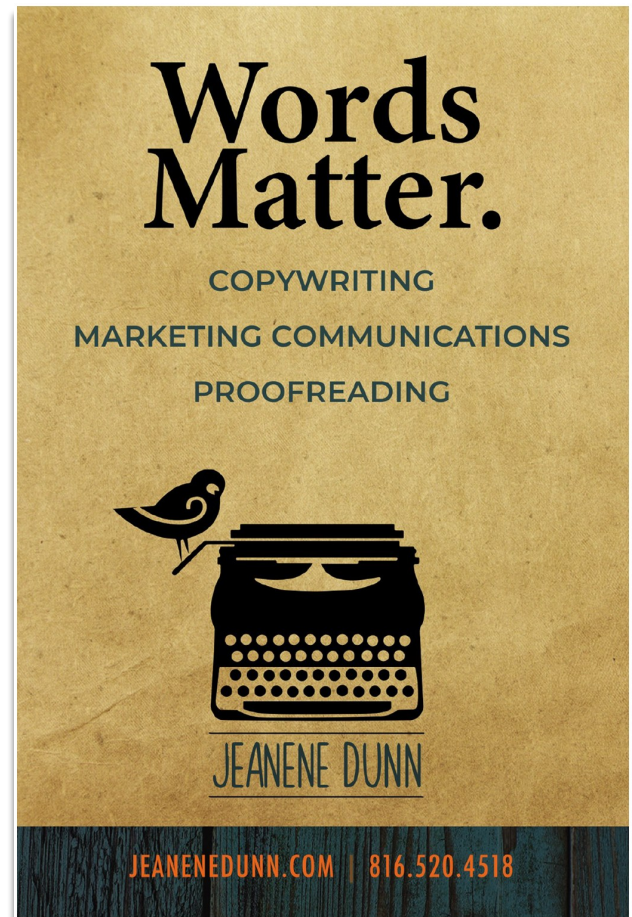
Pay their prices. Supporting a Black-owned business doesn't mean asking the owner to lower their prices, and it shouldn't come with an expectation of a special discount. Paying the advertised price allows the business to account for its costs while earning revenue.

Think beyond restaurants and retail. Support Black-owned businesses that offer professional and creative services, including accountants, lawyers, photographers, designers, consultants and contractors.



Engage with their content. Follow Black-owned businesses on social media, like and share their posts, and interact with their content to help more people discover them.

Consumer spending won't eliminate the larger barriers Black entrepreneurs face, including challenges accessing capital and federal contracts. But where consumers choose to spend, whether they return and whether they tell others about businesses they value can all make a difference.



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