

2020 SUMMER CONFERENCE

DIVERSITY AND RACIAL EQUALITY - A DISCUSSION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ONLINE

July 29, 2020

9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

Sponsored by:

Maryland Department of Commerce
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
TEDCO
Maryland Association of Counties (MACo)

Communities that were distressed pre-COVID-19 are even more distressed today. And, many of these communities are comprised of minority business owners and entrepreneurs. How can economic developers assist these business owners and what are the unique challenges that they face? Attendees will learn about African American Business Owners' Experiences.

9:00 – 9:15 **WELCOME AND MEDA BUSINESS MEETING**

Welcome, Heather Gramm, CEcD, MEDA President
Approval of May Business Meeting Minutes, Richard Griffin, CEcD, MEDA Secretary
Induction of New Members, Renee Winsky, MEDA Membership Co-Chair

9:15 – 10:45 **CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN BUSINESS**

The economic recovery from the last recession produced uneven recovery results, especially for minorities. Hear from African American business owners from across Maryland regarding what they need now to help with the pandemic recovery and what they expect from economic development and their communities at large. African American business owner virtual discussions will uncover unique challenges and opportunities to support them with targeted assistance where it counts. A focus group discussion will lead to opportunities for MEDA and its' members to make the connections and create programs that lead to recovery and sustainability.

Moderator: Tina Williams-Koroma, Esq., President and CEO, TCecure

Panelists:

Sonjie DeCaires, CEO, Sonjé Productions
Tracye Turner, Founder and President/CEO eGovMarket and Co-Owner of Optimal Solutions Group Co-Founder, Revelo Software
Tisa Dais Clark, President and CEO, JD Clark Professional Services



10:45 – 11:30 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Brandon Bellamy, CEO, Velocity Companies

Brandon is a successful real estate entrepreneur who has worked for many years to locate and build opportunity where it is needed the most. But his success, and that of his projects, have not been without their unique challenges, many of which are not apparent to everyone working in the area of economic development. Brandon will provide examples of challenges he has met and overcome and share how he is not alone when it comes to being faced with these unique challenging hurdles. He has a story that exemplifies how to put together a recipe for success using hard work, community support and economic development. Everyone who is working to create jobs and investment in Maryland will benefit from hearing from Mr. Bellamy.

11:30 **CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT**