

CITY OF COLUMBIA
Office of Business Opportunities

12TH ANNUAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK CONFERENCE

**EXPAND *and* CONNECT:
NAVIGATING YOUR
PATH TO SUCCESS**

FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025

Marriott Columbia • 1200 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29201



**CITY OF COLUMBIA'S
OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**
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Welcome

FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Dear Small Business Week Attendees,

Welcome to the 12th Annual City of Columbia Small Business Week Conference, we are excited to have you here today. The City of Columbia is committed to supporting our small business community through local policy-making, resources, and conference like this one provided through our Office of Business Opportunities.

Helping small businesses grow has been and continues to be one of our top priorities at the city. The role that you play in the overall economic viability of our city cannot be understated. A strong small business presence, especially one that thrives in the context of a busy, livable, walkable downtown, is what gives our city its character.

We value all businesses and aim to ensure they receive the highest quality of services possible during all stages of business development. We are strategically aligned with professional organizations, public and private entities that provide value-added resources and services for the small business owner.

Today's conference will provide you with opportunities to gain knowledge, network, and expand your marketability so that you (as a small business owner) can continue to do what you do best: create jobs, help our economy and ensure that our communities remain as vibrant tomorrow as they are today.

As Columbia's City Manager, I certainly understand the vital role small businesses play in our communities. Whether you are new to the area or a longtime resident, navigating the services you need when starting or growing your business can be overwhelming. Be assured, the City of Columbia's staff is devoted to providing you with sound guidance and clear advice to make a big impact on the success of your business. We look forward to being part of your entrepreneurial journey.

Thank you and enjoy the conference!



TERESA WILSON
City Manager

AGENDA

CITY OF COLUMBIA'S 12TH ANNUAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK CONFERENCE

Expand and Connect: Navigating Your Path to Success

- 8:00AM-9:00AM** **Registration • Atrium**
- 9:00AM-9:20AM** **Welcome • Main Ballroom**
Ms. Cynthia Hardy, *Mistress of Ceremony, TV and Radio Personality*
Ms. Ayesha Driggers, *Director, City of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities*
The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, *Mayor, City of Columbia*
The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, *District I, Columbia City Council*
Ms. Melissa L. Lindler, *District Director, SC SBA District Office*
- 9:20AM-9:30AM** **Business Spotlight • Main Ballroom**
Ms. Kalenna Ginyard, *Program Compliance Specialist, City of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities*
2025 Business Spotlight Honoree: Ms. Tangie Beaty, *Founder, WOW Studio One*
- 9:30AM-10:15AM** **Introduction of Keynote Speaker • Main Ballroom**
Ms. Cynthia Hardy, *Mistress of Ceremony*
2025 Keynote Speaker: Maj. Gen. Daryl Hood, *Commanding General of the Army Training Center and Fort Jackson*
- 10:15AM-10:25AM** **Introduction of Morning Breakout session presenters**
Ms. Cynthia Hardy, *Mistress of Ceremony*
- 10:30AM-11:15AM** **Breakout sessions • Concurrent Sessions**
How to Respond to Procurement Opportunities with Confidence • Main Ballroom
City of Columbia's Department of Procurement & Contracts

The Digital Growth Formula: How Social Media & Marketing Can Elevate Your Business • Carolina F
L. Ken Walker, *Digital Marketing Coach, Walker Branding, Marketing & Consulting, Columbia, SC*

Entrepreneurial Mindset for Success in Today's Economy • Carolina G
Ron Harvey, *Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Global Core Strategies & Consulting, LLC, Columbia, SC*

Generative AI: 10X Your Business • Carolina H
Shennice Cleckley, *Founder/CEO, Melanin Innovations, Lexington, SC*
- 11:15AM-11:30AM** **Break**
- 11:30AM-12:00PM** **2025 South Carolina National Small Business Week Awards • Main Ballroom**
Melissa L. Lindler, *District Director, SC SBA District Office*
- 12:00PM-12:30PM** **Blessing of Food, Buffet Lunch**
The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr., *District II, Columbia City Council*
- 12:45PM-1:30PM** **Lunch Session**
Are You Lender Ready? Everything You Need to Know Before Applying for a Loan
Frank Anderson, *Lender Relations Specialist & District International Trade Office, SC District Office, U.S. Small Business Administration*
Bret Whiting, *Loan Officer, City of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities*
Brian Colclough, *Chief Lending Officer, SC Community Loan Fund*
Peter Klatka, *Market Manager, Woodforest Bank*
Chad Bowers, *Branch Manager, Palmetto Citizens Federal Credit Union*
Sandy Moore, *Senior Business Relationship Manager, Wells Fargo*

Closing from the Office of Business Opportunities
- 1:30PM-3:30PM** **SBA Matchmaking & Vendor Showcase**



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Maj. Gen. Daryl Hood

Commanding General, U.S. Army Training Center and Fort Jackson

Major General Daryl Hood, a native of San Antonio, Texas, attended the University of Georgia and graduated in 1991 with a commission as a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear officer.

He became the 54th commander of the U.S. Army Training Center and Fort Jackson in August 2024 following his assignment as the Commanding General of the 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives (CBRNE) Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Throughout his 33 year career as an Army officer, Major General Hood has held multiple levels of command and staff positions in the continental United States, Europe, South Korea, the Middle East, and Central Asia during peacetime and combat operations.

Major General Hood holds a bachelor's degree in Agriculture Technology Management, from the University of Georgia, and a Master's Degree in Human Resources from Webster University and one in Strategic Studies from the Air University. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army's Chemical Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Army Combined Arms Services Staff School, Army Command and General Staff College, and Air Force Senior Service College.

His awards and decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Legion of Merit (with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Defense Superior Service Medal (with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Distinguished Service Medal, Army Parachutist Badge, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge.

Major General Hood is married and has two sons, two daughters, a son-in-law, a granddaughter, and two grandsons.



MISTRESS OF CEREMONY

Cynthia Hardy

Radio and TV Personality

Cynthia Pryor Hardy is currently Senior Vice President of Communications at Columbia Housing in Columbia, SC. Cynthia's 30+ year career has afforded a host of opportunities to work on a number of media platforms to include radio, television, print, and social media.

Since 2004, Cynthia has owned OnPoint Media LLC, an award-winning public relations and broadcast media company. Over the years, OnPoint has developed winning communications strategies for clients that overcome adversity and build credibility & public trust. Cynthia Hardy is widely known for her effectiveness in helping organizations maximize & manage their messaging; thereby controlling their own narrative.

On the broadcast media side—Cynthia has worked as an award-winning television news reporter, anchor, and talk show host. For 20 years, her top-rated weekend radio talk show—*OnPoint with Cynthia Hardy*—has tackled tough topics and asked the hard questions. Since 2010, her award winning television show has aired on WACH Fox TV.

Known for her service in the community, Cynthia is the recipient of numerous awards and citations for her work in the fields of communications and public service.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

How to Respond to Procurement Opportunities with Confidence

City of Columbia's Department of Procurement & Contracts

Join the City's Procurement Solicitation Services team for an informative and practical session designed to demystify the procurement process and equip vendors with the tools they need to submit successful bids and proposals. This session will walk participants through the key components of a procurement opportunity, share best practices for crafting clear and compliant responses, and highlight common pitfalls to avoid. Attendees will gain a better understanding of how public procurement works, what evaluators look for, and how to position themselves for success. Walk away with greater clarity, useful templates, and the confidence to compete effectively in future opportunities.

The Digital Growth Formula: How Social Media & Marketing Can Elevate Your Business

L. Ken Walker

Digital Marketing Coach, Walker Branding, Marketing & Consulting, Columbia, SC
Email: infokwshow@gmail.com • Website: www.walkerbrandconsult.com

In today's fast-paced digital world, your brand's online presence can make or break your business. Whether you're a small business just starting out or a larger company looking to refine your digital strategy, this session will provide practical insights and actionable strategies for leveraging social media, branding, and marketing to drive growth, engagement, and revenue.

Entrepreneurial Mindset for Success in Today's Economy

Ron Harvey

Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Global Core Strategies & Consulting, LLC, Columbia, SC
Email: rharvey@gcs.consulting • Website: www.gcs.consulting

The Entrepreneurial Mindset for Success in Today's Economy workshop is designed to equip small business owners with the tools and strategies needed to thrive in an ever-changing economic landscape. This interactive session will focus on key entrepreneurial mindset shifts, resilience, customer-centric growth, financial intelligence, and strategic partnerships. Participants will learn how GDP trends impact their industry, identify target audience spending patterns, and refine pricing and revenue strategies for consistency and scalability.





BREAKOUT SESSION

Generative AI: 10X Your Business

Shennice Cleckley

Founder/CEO, Melanin Innovations, Lexington, SC

Email: shennice@melanininnovations.com • Website: www.melanininnovations.com

This dynamic and informative session will demystify Generative AI and empower small business owners to leverage its transformative power for exponential growth. We'll move beyond the buzzwords to explore practical applications of Generative AI across key business functions. Participants will gain a clear understanding of what Generative AI is, how it works, and its potential to revolutionize their operations.

LUNCH SESSION

Are You Lender Ready? Preparing Small Businesses for Meeting a Potential Lender

Representatives from lending institutions will provide participants informative information on how to prepare when meeting with a potential lender. Participants will walk away with the tools they need to assist them when meeting a potential lender.



MODERATOR Frank Anderson

Lender Relations Specialist & District
International Trade Office, SC District Office,
U.S. Small Business Administration



Bret Whiting
Loan Officer, City
of Columbia's
Office of Business
Opportunities



Brian Colclough
Chief Lending Officer,
SC Community Loan
Fund



Peter Klatka
Market Manager,
Woodforest Bank



Chad Bowers
Branch Manager,
Palmetto Citizens
Federal Credit Union



Sandy Moore
Senior Business
Relationship Manager,
Wells Fargo

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2025 SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK AWARDS

The SBA South Carolina District Office congratulates the winners of the 2025 South Carolina National Small Business Week Awards!



U.S. Small Business Administration

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AWARDS

South Carolina's State Small Business Person of the Year
Mr. Michael Haldeman,
Owner of SpokeWorks Bicycle Workshop,
Summerville, S.C.

Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence - Service
Ms. Lisa Tanner, Small Business Liaison Officer and Senior Manager of Supply Chain Excellence, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, Aiken, S.C.

Regional Subcontractor of the Year
Mr. Dan Anderson, Diversified Supply, Inc., Aiken, S.C.

SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL AWARDS

South Carolina Small Business Exporter of the Year
Mr. Darris Stoll, Stoll Industries, Inc., Abbeville, S.C.

SBDC Excellence & Innovation Award
Florence Area Small Business Development Center,
Florence, S.C.

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE AWARDS

Female Small Business Person of the Year
Ms. Rita Wilson,
Alphagraphics Beaufort, Beaufort, S.C.

Veteran Small Business of the Year
Mr. Thomas Loffredo,
Patriot Global Services LLC, Seneca, S.C.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year
Ms. Lauren Matthews,
MattLane Construction, Inc., Columbia, S.C.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR AWARDS

South Carolina 8(a) Firm of the Year
Mr. Nathaniel Durant, ND3 Inc., Columbia, S.C.

South Carolina Procurement Agency of the Year
NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic, Beaufort & Parris Island, S.C.

SOUTH CAROLINA FISCAL YEAR 2024 LENDER AWARDS

South Carolina 7(a) SBA Lenders of the Year
(Number of Loans Made)

#1 - 7a SBA Lender – TD Bank
#2 - 7a Lender – Wells Fargo

(Dollar Volume of Loans Made)
#1 - 7a SBA Lender – Live Oak Bank
#2 - 7a SBA Lender – GBank

South Carolina 504 SBA Lenders of the Year
(Number & Dollar Volume of Loans Made)

#1 - 504 SBA Lender –
Provident Business Financial Services
#2 - 504 SBA Lender –
Appalachian Development Corporation

South Carolina SBA Microlenders of the Year
(Number & Dollar Volume of Loans Made)

#1 - SBA Microlender - CLIMB Fund
#2 - SBA Microlender – CommunityWorks

SC SBA 3rd Party Lenders of the Year
(Number & Dollar Volume of Loans Made)

#1 - SBA 3rd Party Lender – TD Bank
#2 - SBA 3rd Party Lender – Dogwood State Bank



FastTrac Growth Venture Course

The FastTrac Growth Venture is a course designed to support the entrepreneur seeking to take their existing business to a higher level. This program assists entrepreneurs in analyzing their current business condition to identify the best opportunities for growth. Budgeting, sales strategies, management team roles, operational systems, and business plan implementation are key areas of emphasis. The course also facilitates networking between entrepreneurs and experienced professionals. This training is designed to equip aspiring entrepreneurs with more in-depth business skills to grow their business successfully.

2025 GRADUATES

Facilitator: Mr. Allen Brown, Midlands Technical College
Emails: allenbrown@midlandstech.edu; allenb@lionesquecm.com

Tangie Beaty – WOW Studio One, LLC
Chelsea Bennett – Ivey Palmer PR, LLC
Uzuri Boatwright – Umoja’s Wombniverse, LLC
Bishalia Bowman – Prestige Management, LLC
Kadeidre Gaymon – Unfinished Business Catering, LLC



NxLevel For Micro Entrepreneurs Course

The NxLevel for Micro Entrepreneurs course is a training that prepares entrepreneurs to compete, win, and survive in the marketplace. It is designed for businesses with less than five (5) employees. Participants learn how to choose a business idea, develop a business plan, develop a marketing plan, understand market analyses, explore financing options, assess risk management, develop a customer service philosophy, as well as other relevant entrepreneurial skills.

2025 GRADUATES

Facilitator: Mr. Paul Smith, BEST Carolina, LLC

Email: waylyn5321@gmail.com

- | | |
|--|---|
| Terry Armstrong – Just Around the Benz Mobile Service, LLC | Monique Lemmon – The Lemmon Touch, LLC |
| Cesar Barrerra – Ironwood Contracting, LLP | Deadreau Mack – Lady Boss Studio, LLC |
| Alexus Bessellieu – Ace’s Space, LLC | Kimblie Mitchell-Keelin – Eventful Occasions |
| Andrea Butler – StyleQueen Studios | Monique Moss – Let’s Get Roll’n SC, LLC |
| Courtney Chisholm | Azunna Njoku – Just Jerseys |
| Patrice Fashion – Face Forward with Fashion | Mary Ellen Perretta – The Collective |
| Alisha Ford – Opulence Property Management, LLC | Dr. Harriet A. Roland – Odyssey Editing and Proofreading Services |
| Sharonda Gordon – Happy Days Adult Day Center | Latrice Ryant – LS Events, LLC |
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| Quintara Hatten – Hatten Agency, LLC | Shawnette Thompson |
| Bertha Irby – Bella’s Design & Catering | Angela Waters – Babe 302 |
| Kimberly Jamison – Kay Jay’s Print Shop | Sammelia White – Level Up 360 Overhead |
| Celeste Jones – Final Cut Tax Refund, LLC | Desiree Williams – VIORE’, LLC |
| Kim Jones – Klouds2Klass, LLC Counseling Service | Leslie Wilson – Wilson, Brown and Joshua, LLC |
| Latonya Jones – Nattalicious, LLC | Lisa Wilson – Splendor Enterprises, LLC |
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 1339 Main Street
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businesslicensing.columbiasc.gov



City of Columbia Department of Procurement & Contracts
 1800 Main Street, 2nd Floor
 Columbia, SC 29201
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South Carolina Department of Commerce
 1201 Main Street, Suite 1600
 Columbia, SC 29201
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South Carolina Small Business Development Center USC Region
 1014 Greene Street
 Columbia, SC 29208
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www.scsbdc.com



South Carolina Veterans Business Outreach Center
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CITY OF COLUMBIA'S MINORITY BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The City of Columbia's Minority Business Advisory Council (MBAC) was established in 2013 to assist in coordinating City efforts to maximize the opportunities and growth potential of minority businesses.

Through guidance and input on current policies and practices, MBAC is charged with collaborating with the Office of Business Opportunities (OBO) to carry out responsibilities in the areas of economic development, employment, procurement, training, and other matters affecting the economic vitality of the small business community.

MBAC consists of eight (8) small business owners or individuals who consistently support the development of small businesses through their work in private industry, government, and academia.

MBAC plays an active role in the City of Columbia's Mentor Protégé Program (MPP). Since MBAC's inception, several recommended amendments have been approved by Columbia City Council.

Current **MBAC MEMBERS**

Karen R. Jenkins, President/CEO – KRJ Consulting, LLC

Allen Brown, Managing Principal & Business Partner – Lionesque Capital Management

Jimmy Chao, President – Chao and Associates, LLC

Anthony Lawrence, Managing Principal – MOTA Design, Construction, Development

Vanessa Mota, Owner – Mota Crosslinking Business Academy

Cheryl Salley, Chief Executive Officer – Treadwater Solutions

Ronald Taylor, Contractor – Taylor Brothers Construction Company

Kadenia Williams Jarvis, Founder & Chief Financial Officer – Jarvis Financial Services, LLC

CITY OF COLUMBIA'S OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Office of Business Opportunities (OBO) is committed to supporting initiatives that benefit all small businesses located in, or that want to do business with, the City of Columbia. This is accomplished by providing creative financing and funding, technical assistance, and the City's utilization of local small businesses to ensure that our funds contribute to the economic growth of all communities.

Commercial Loans & Lending

Financial assistance to start-up and existing businesses for growth, expansion, retention and the creation of new jobs, and assistance in the redevelopment of commercial corridors.

Contractor & Supplier Engagement

Training and support for city initiatives designed to increase local contractor's capacity to compete for government contracts and other procurement opportunities. Programs include: Mentor Protégé; Local Business Enterprise; and the Columbia Disadvantaged Business Enterprise.

Technical Assistance, Education & Advocacy

Business development assistance and courses for start-ups and existing businesses looking to grow and expand. Topics covered include: marketing, use of social media, business plan development, finances, legal issues, and more.



Office of Business Opportunities Staff



Ayesha Driggers
Director



Shontay Cooper
Administrative Specialist



Tonya Porter-DeBerry
Grants Coordinator



Bret Whiting
Commercial Loan Officer



Carla Eichelberger
*Program Compliance
Coordinator*



Cassandra Fletcher
*Program Compliance
Administrator*



LaTonya Germany
Program Compliance Specialist



Kalenna Ginyard
Program Compliance Specialist



CITY OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL

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Councilman Edward H. McDowell, Jr., District II
Councilman Will Brennan, Mayor Pro-Tem, District III
Councilwoman Aditi Bussells, At-Large
Councilwoman Tina N. Herbert, District I
Councilman Peter M. Brown, District IV
Councilman Tyler D. Bailey, At-Large

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OnPoint Media, LLC
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