

# NFBPA

National Forum for Black Public Administrators

## Revitalizing Communities: Harnessing Small Business and Neighborhood Association Engagement in Minority Communities



LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
**HISPANIC  
NETWORK**

LGHN

Conference

January 27 – 29, 2025

Mesa Convention Center  
**MESA, ARIZONA**

# Community Pillars



Neighborhood Association  
Empowerment



Communication Strategy



Small Business Engagement



# Neighborhood Association Empowerment

# Strategies for Enhancing Neighborhood Services through Community Engagement

- **Build Strong Relationships**
  - Engage with residents regularly through town hall meetings, community forums, and informal gatherings.
- **Empower Local Leaders**
  - Support leaders who can act as liaisons and mobilize community members.
- **Inclusive Planning**
  - Involve community members in decision making through participatory budgeting and advisory boards.
- **Transparent Communication**
  - Keep the community informed using social media, newsletters, and local media.
- **Leverage Technology**
  - Utilize online surveys, community apps, and virtual meetings to increase participation.



# Overcoming Challenges in Neighborhood Engagement

- **Trauma and Sensitivity**
  - Adopt a trauma-informed approach by training neighborhood leaders and providing safe spaces for dialogue.
- **Distrust and Misinformation**
  - Establish transparent communication channels to disseminate accurate information.
- **Diverse Needs**
  - Conduct needs assessments through surveys and focus groups to tailor support.
- **Resource Constraints**
  - Partner with local organizations and non-profits to enhance resources.
- **Long-term Engagement**
  - Develop long-term support programs, including counseling and neighborhood-building activities.



# Long-term Impacts of Neighborhood Engagement – Case Study

- **Improved Housing Conditions**
  - Collaborative efforts reduced vacant properties and increased homeownership.
- **Enhanced Infrastructure**
  - Regular improvements in street lighting and sidewalk connectivity.
- **Increased Public Safety**
  - Community policing and anti-drug initiatives led to reduced crime rates.
- **Economic Development**
  - Support for existing businesses and attraction of new enterprises.
- **Neighborhood Appearance**
  - Landscaping projects and cleanups improved aesthetic appeal and neighborhood pride.





# Communication Strategy

# Empowering Communities Through Effective Communication: The Lauderdale Lakes Success Story

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Lauderdale Lakes recognized the devastating impact on residents and businesses, especially small, family-owned establishments. Many entrepreneurs had invested their life savings and time into building their businesses as a legacy for future generations. To provide support, the City developed multiple assistance programs.

- **Rental Assistance:** The City offered financial assistance to residents struggling to pay rent due to the pandemic's economic impact.
- **Mortgage Assistance:** Homeowners affected by COVID-19 could apply for financial assistance to help cover mortgage payments.
- **Minor Home Repair Assistance:** This program provided grants for essential home repairs such as windows, doors, and air conditioning units, ensuring residents could live safely and comfortably during the pandemic.
- **Business Assistance Programs:** Safe and Clean Program: To help local businesses comply with COVID-19 regulations and ensure a sanitary environment for patrons, the City offered up to \$20,000 in funding for necessary supplies, appliances, or remodeling.





# The Challenge

- During the rollout of COVID-19 assistance programs, the City encountered an unexpectedly low application rate, less than 10% for each initiative. This was puzzling, given the community is predominantly minority-based with an over 75% poverty rate. It became apparent that there was a significant communication gap between the city and its residents, along with a lack of understanding of the specific needs and challenges faced by local businesses.
- Recognizing the need to bridge this divide, we embarked on a mission to better understand our audience and identify new communication channels to reach every resident and business owner. By doing so, we aimed to uncover the unique struggles encountered by small businesses and develop targeted strategies to address these issues.



# Improves Communications for Entrepreneurial Success, Collaboration, and Economic Growth.

- In an effort to address communication challenges and strengthen support for local businesses, the City of Lauderdale Lakes established the Lauderdale Lakes BEAMS program. This initiative prioritizes the following key areas.
  - **Empowering Entrepreneurs:** By providing essential resources, skills training, and expert guidance, the program helps local businesses thrive and expand.
  - **Facilitating Community Connections:** Lauderdale Lakes BEAMS encourages open communication and fosters connections among various stakeholders, including entrepreneurs, residents, and city officials.
  - **Tailored Support and Development:** The program offers customized solutions and targeted initiatives to address the unique needs and challenges faced by local businesses.
- To ensure the effectiveness of the program, the Lauderdale Lakes BEAMS team carefully crafted its branding, curriculum, and marketing materials. Through a range of engaging activities, such as courses, coaching sessions, competitions, and events, the initiative has made a substantial impact on the community and its businesses.





# Small Business Engagement

# We Are FTL



# #SomosFTL



**SISTRUNK  
MARKETPLACE**

EAT • DRINK • GAME



**We Are  
Sistrunk**

@WeAreFTL

**Sistrunk** HISTORICAL ORGANIZATION  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
PRESENTS  
**THE 45<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PARADE & FESTIVAL**



*Save The Date*  
**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22ND, 2025**

<p><b>SISTRUNK SK @ 7:00 AM</b> The Annual Chris Smith All Star Classic @ Deleeve Park 2520 Sistrunk Blvd. Registration: WWW.SISTRUNKSK.COM</p>	<p><b>PARADE @ 8:30 AM</b> STARTING @ LINCOLN PARK &amp; TRAVELS EAST DOWN SISTRUNK BLVD. TO NW 9TH AVENUE. FEATURING MARCHING BANDS • STEP TEAMS CLASSIC CARS • FLOAT CONTEST &amp; MORE</p>	<p><b>STREET FESTIVAL FROM 11 AM - 8 PM</b> JOIN US ON SISTRUNK BLVD. FROM NW 9TH AVENUE TO NW 13TH AVENUE FOR PERFORMANCES FROM LIVE BANDS, GAMES, KIDS ZONE, MERCAHNDISE, FOOD &amp; MUCH MORE</p>
---	---	--

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE NOVEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> THROUGH DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> 2024 AT 5PM.  
ALL DESIRED PARTICIPANTS MUST COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE

WWW.SISTRUNKFESTIVAL.ORG    SISTRUNK.FESTIVAL@TABOO.COM




**SISTRUNK  
HISTORICAL  
ORGANIZATION®**

EST 2020

SISTRUNK

**Smitty's**

WINGS



 **WeAreFTL**



**STARTUP**  
 **FTL**  
**INNOVATE & ELEVATE**

INNOVATE & ELEVATE

# Breakout Activity





# Case Study Instructions

- You will all be given the case study of Revitalizing Oakwood Heights
- You will be provided with the background of Oakwood Heights and key stakeholders
- As a group, you will represent the Oakwood Heights Revitalization Task Force. You will be responsible for creating a Revitalization Plan to present to the City Council.
- The revitalization plan should include the three community pillars:
  1. Neighborhood Association Empowerment
  2. Communication Strategy
  3. Small Business Engagement



# Case Study Deliverables

- Each group will present a 5-minute summary of their revitalization component, focusing on:
  - Key strategies for achieving their goals.
  - Expected outcomes and how success will be measured.
  - Potential challenges and how to overcome them.
  - One key partnership critical to their success.



# Case Study Challenge

Your group represents the Oakwood Heights Revitalization Task Force. You are responsible for creating a Revitalization Plan to present to the City Council. The plan must demonstrate how Oakwood Heights will:

1. **Empower small businesses** through training, grants, and improved infrastructure.
2. **Strengthen neighborhood associations** to lead community projects and improve engagement with local leaders.
3. **Foster effective communication** among businesses, neighborhood associations, and the local government to ensure collaboration and accountability.
4. **Promote youth engagement** through partnerships that create opportunities for economic and social development.
5. **Address equitable development** by ensuring that the plan benefits all community members without displacement.



# Revitalizing Oakwood Heights Background

- Oakwood Heights is a historically vibrant neighborhood with a large Hispanic and African-American population. Over the years, the community has faced significant economic challenges, including the closure of several small businesses, reduced funding for community programs, and a lack of engagement between the local government, small businesses, and neighborhood associations. Despite these challenges, Oakwood Heights has a strong sense of cultural pride and a network of small businesses and local leaders eager to revitalize the area.
- Recently, the City announced a \$2 million community revitalization grant aimed at fostering economic growth, improving social services, and supporting minority-owned businesses. To access these funds, Oakwood Heights must develop a comprehensive revitalization plan that demonstrates broad community engagement and sustainable strategies for long-term growth.



# Key Stakeholders

- **Oakwood Heights Business Association (OHBA):** A coalition of 50 local minority-owned businesses. Their primary concern is increasing foot traffic, improving safety, and gaining access to capital for expansion.
- **Neighbors United Association (NUA):** A neighborhood group focused on improving quality of life, safety, and access to affordable housing. They have a strong base of local volunteers but lack experience in securing funding or partnering with businesses.
- **City Council Representative, Ms. Lopez:** The district's councilmember who is supportive of revitalization efforts but expects a well-thought-out proposal with measurable goals and diverse partnerships.
- **Local Youth Group:** Comprised of high school students who want to advocate for more recreational spaces and youth entrepreneurship programs.
- **Faith-Based Organizations:** A network of local churches and mosques interested in providing social services, such as food assistance and job training.



# Revitalizing Oakwood Heights Background

15 minutes!

- Oakwood Heights is a historically vibrant neighborhood with a large Hispanic and African-American population. Over the years, the community has faced significant economic challenges, including the closure of several small businesses, reduced funding for community programs, and a lack of engagement between the local government, small businesses, and neighborhood associations. Despite these challenges, Oakwood Heights has a strong sense of cultural pride and a network of small businesses and local leaders eager to revitalize the area.
- Recently, the City announced a \$2 million community revitalization grant aimed at fostering economic growth, improving social services, and supporting minority-owned businesses. To access these funds, Oakwood Heights must develop a comprehensive revitalization plan that demonstrates broad community engagement and sustainable strategies for long-term growth.



# Group Presentations & Discussion

# Thank you!

- Dr. Philip Harris  
drphilipharris4@gmail.com
- Peggy Castano  
PeggyC@LauderdaleLakes.org
- Amber Cabrera  
AmCabrera@FortLauderdale.gov
- Melissa Mata  
Mmata@FortLauderdale.gov





# Thank You Panelists, Attendees and Sponsors

