Introduction

According to the U.S. Census, Charlotte metropolitan area’s foreign-born population numbered less than 15,000 in 1980 but jumped to 100,000 in 2000, a 315 percent growth rate over the 20-year period. In Mecklenburg County, the foreign-born population has changed from 18,000 in 1990 to 124,000 in 2010, making up 13.5 percent of total population in the county. Due to the dramatic changes in the immigrant population, researchers have labeled Charlotte as a twenty-first century “pre-emerging” immigration gateway (Singer 2004). While the large immigration waves are significantly transforming our regional demographic profile, they have also expanded consumers’ demand and the purchasing power for ethnic products. Indeed, according to a recent study (Kasarda and Johnson 2006), in Mecklenburg County, Hispanic spending has to take place outside of the country — commonly termed “leakage” — due to the lack of sufficient retail and service facilities to meet the consumer needs of Hispanics in their local communities. Therefore, promoting ethnic businesses is necessary under the current globalization context.

Ethnic businesses are also an integral part of Charlotte’s economic engine for regional development. Over a recent 15-year period, small businesses created about 65 percent of the net new jobs in the private sector, according to conservative estimates cited in a new report from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Advocacy (Headd 2010). In North Carolina, small businesses (defined as having fewer than 500 employees) represent 98 percent of all employers and employ 47.3 percent of the private sector workforce (Small Business Administration 2012). While the employment situation in 2008-2009 was weak, small businesses in North Carolina represented 81.6 percent of the net new private-sector jobs from 2005 to 2008. Being such a large part of the state’s economy, these businesses are central to North Carolina’s economic health and well-being.

Partnering with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Pride Magazine, funded by Advantage Carolina, the initial objective of this project is to identify ethnic minority and women owned businesses in the Charlotte region. The ultimate goal is to better understand how to foster growth within the sector and help formulate policy to engage minority-owned business going forward. At this stage, we are focusing on African American-owned businesses and hope to explore other minority business groups in the future. Specifically, we ask the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of African American owned businesses, such as business type, employment size, supply chains and market coverage?
- How are they involved with local communities?
- What are the challenges and opportunities that they face?

Data Sources

In addition to public data from the U.S. Census Bureau, data used in this report primarily came from three sources: a database constructed by the research team, three focus group discussions with business owners and business supporting groups, and an email survey.

The initial database began as a product of several different lists acquired from Pride Magazine, Business Wise and Dun & Bradstreet. To ensure accurate data, website and telephone screening was conducted by a research team from UNCC from May 2011 — January 2012. A final list was completed in February of 2012. The final database does not include every minority-owned business in the area for several reasons. For example, the original datasets are not exhaustive; in some cases the phone follow ups are not answered. The number of women-owned businesses especially is much smaller than the SBO estimates. In the database, some information, such as size and year of establishment or acquisition, is missing.
Based on the database, we conducted two focus group discussions with 13 African American business owners and one focus group discussion with 14 business supporting agencies/organizations/companies in the Charlotte area. Each session lasted 90 to 120 minutes. The selected businesses represent a wide range of business types. The supporting groups come from both private and public sectors including representatives from Lowe’s, the Carolinas Minority Supplier Development Council, the City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Black Chamber. At the same time, a questionnaire with 44 questions was sent out via email to 873 businesses by the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce. Of those, 132 businesses, including 33 African American businesses, responded.

**Overview of Ethnic Minority Businesses in the Charlotte Region**

According to the estimation from the SBA, the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill Metropolitan Statistical area (including Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Mecklenburg, Union and York counties) contains 58,358 women-owned firms (regardless of ethnicity), 21,565 African American-owned, 7,010 Hispanic-owned and 5,976 Asian-owned firms. Firms with paid employees (i.e., employer firms that are different from self-employment) represent a small proportion of each type of business — 6,208 (10.6 percent) for women, 1,222 (5.7 percent) for African American, 636 (9.1 percent) for Hispanic and 1,927 (32.2 percent) for Asian (Figure 1). Among all of the ethnic groups, Asian has the largest number of employer firms, and Hispanic has the smallest number of employer firms. The percentage of employer firms is the smallest for African American owned businesses, which indicates that the average size for the African American-owned firms is smaller.

**Figure 1: Total Counts of Minority Owned Firms in the Charlotte MSA**

*Data source: Survey of Business Owners, U.S. Census*

In Mecklenburg County, there are 27,456 women-owned firms (regardless of ethnicity), 13,873 African American-owned, 4,242 Hispanic-owned and 4,054 Asian-owned firms. Similar to the larger metropolitan area, firms with paid employees represent a small proportion of each type of business — 3,020 (11.0 percent) for women-owned, 701
(5.1 percent) for African-American, 379 (8.9 percent) for Hispanic and 1,195 (29.5 percent) for Asian (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Total Counts of Minority Owned Firms in Mecklenburg County](image)

Table 1 measures the performance of employer firms in terms of the number of paid employees, annual sales and annual payrolls for each minority group. For each ethnic group, Mecklenburg County shares a little over half of all firms in the metropolitan area in all measurements. For the entire metropolitan area, the annual sales per business and the annual payroll per employee for African American businesses are slightly higher than those for Asian businesses but much lower than those for Hispanic businesses. These differences across ethnic groups hold the same for the Mecklenburg County.

The database that we compiled is focused on ethnic minority employer firms. We identified 22,695 women and ethnic minority-owned employer firms. As shown in Figure 3, African American firms, totaling 1,682, make up the largest proportion of minority employer firms, followed by 471 Hispanic firms, 406 Asian firms and 136 other firms. Among all ethnic minority owned employer firms, one-third are owned by women (Figure 4).

![Figure 3: Composition of Ethnic Minority Firms](image)

![Figure 4: Ethnic Minority Businesses by Gender of Owner](image)

### Table 1: Performance of Employer Firms for Minority Owned Firms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte MSA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of employer firms</td>
<td>6,208</td>
<td>1,222</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>1,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of employees</td>
<td>56,431</td>
<td>12,286</td>
<td>5,247</td>
<td>13,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales (bil.)</td>
<td>$8.30</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
<td>$1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual payrolls (bil.)</td>
<td>$1.60</td>
<td>$0.30</td>
<td>$0.20</td>
<td>$0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mecklenburg County</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of employer firms</td>
<td>3,020</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>1,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of employees</td>
<td>28,959</td>
<td>6,082</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>8,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales (bil.)</td>
<td>$3.70</td>
<td>$0.70</td>
<td>$0.80</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual payrolls (bil.)</td>
<td>$0.90</td>
<td>$0.20</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
<td>$0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Survey of Business Owners, U.S. Census
**Characteristics of African American (AA) Businesses**

**Motivation to start a business:** Many business owners start their own firms to seek personal freedom, financial independence, control and an independent lifestyle. For example, one focus group participant commented that, "I think owning your own business really provides really the ultimate freedom somewhat, and also to utilize creativity that you're somewhat restrained when in the corporate sector." There was a consensus that business ownership provides significant economic and social upward mobility for the ethnic minority labor force. Although two focus group discussion participants mentioned that they were laid off before starting their own businesses, they expressed that owning a business provides an entirely new lifestyle and better opportunities.

**Size:** According to our database, African American-owned (AA) firms are smaller on average than firms owned by other minority groups. With the number of employees for AA firms ranging from one to 35, the average size of AA employer firms is 5.2 employees. Hispanic firms range from one to 90 employees, with an average of 7.1 employees. Asian firms range from one to 700, with an average of 9.6 firms. The survey responses illustrate the same pattern. The majority of AA business respondents (64.7 percent) have one to four employees. When asked about the square footage of local facilities, we found that the average size of an AA firm's facility is 3,385.73 square feet while the average for all survey respondents is 6,899.44 square feet — more than twice the size of the AA group on average.

**Years in business:** On average, we found that AA firms are younger than other groups. In the database, the average year in business is approximately 12 years for AA firms but is 15 years for both Hispanic and Asian firms. Similarly, in our survey, the average year of acquisition by the total number of respondents is around 1989, while the AA owners’ average is around 2003. Therefore, AA owned businesses are newer and less established on average.

**Business Type:** As shown in Figure 5, 66 percent of AA firms are highly concentrated in three industrial sectors: Administrative and Support and Waste Management (26.4 percent; #12); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (20.4 percent, #11); and Construction (19.2 percent, #3). In contrast, 34.6 percent of Hispanic firms are in Construction (#3) and 17.4 percent are in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (#11). Asian firms are more evenly distributed across industrial sectors with 20.2 percent in Accommodation and Food Services (#16); 16.1 percent in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (#11); 15.1 percent in personal services (#17); 14.2 percent in Retail Trade (#6); and 10.1 percent in Construction (#3).

**Geographic Scope of Markets, Suppliers and Competitors:** Based on the survey results and similar to answers from all respondents, we found that AA firms are supplied predominately by domestic sources rather than international (95-96 percent primarily supplied by domestic suppliers for both groups) and that the majority of their domestic suppliers are within the city of Charlotte (58.47 percent). Furthermore, both groups rely primarily on domestic clientele (both 96 percent). Again, the domestic customers for both the AA group and total group are primarily from the city of Charlotte, 63.9 and 56.8 percent respectively. However, AA firms have a larger percentage of international customers (16.25 percent) compared to the total group (11.11 percent).

Both groups have predominately domestic competitors, but the AA group has a higher percentage of international competition (21.29 percent) compared to the total group (15.39 percent). Of domestic competitors for AA business owners, 68.85 percent are located within Charlotte, which is a greater amount compared to the total group at 61.54 percent. Overall, the AA firms in this survey are much more international in terms of their suppliers, customers and competition in relation to the overall pool of business owners.

**Source of Finance:** A majority of business owners reported that they have relied on personal or family assets other than their own savings to start their businesses (Figure 6). The percentage for the AA businesses (83.3 percent) is slightly higher than the percentage for all respondents (79.6 percent). While 22.4 percent of all respondents reported that they used personal or family credit cards as financial sources, only 12.5 percent of AA businesses reported doing so. The proportion of owners who used business loans from federal, state or local government to start or acquire their businesses is also higher for the entire group (19.4 percent) than for the African American group (12.5 percent). The overall group (11.2 percent) also has a higher percentage of businesses who received investment from venture capitalists than the AA firms (8.3 percent).

**Full-Time Employees and Benefits:** For the entire group of respondents, 43 percent of business owners stated that 76 to 100 percent of their employees work full-time, and 35.5 percent stated that 0 to 10 percent of their employees work full-time. In contrast, the majority of AA
owners stated that 0 to 10 percent of their employees are full-time, and only 25 percent of owners said that 76 to 100 percent of their employees are full-time. This pattern is similar to the earlier discussion about the smaller size of AA firms. While the majority of all businesses provide paid holidays, vacations, and/or sick leave (50 percent); 43.9 percent provide health insurance; and 23.5 percent make contributions to retirement plans, half of AA respondents stated that they provide “none of the above” in the benefits listed in the survey (50.0 percent) and only 20.8 percent of firms provide health insurance; 29.2 percent provide paid holidays, vacation, and/or sick leave; and only 8.3 percent contribute to retirement plans. This is largely because AA firms have a smaller number of full-time employees on average.

**Where AA Firms are Located and Why**

Townroe (1969, p.24) argues that, “Each investment is dependent on the actual or expected environment within which the enterprise operates.” Neoclassical economic theory links location decisions to profit maximizing and cost-minimizing strategies. That is, the probability that a business locates in a particular area depends on how the characteristics of that area affect profits relative to the characteristics of all other available areas. These local characteristics can affect profits on both the cost and revenue sides through the relative prices of capital, land, the level of qualification and skill qualities of the available work force and local wage level, which in many cases is determined by the demand of the job market (Arauzo-Carod 2008). However, the inputs and information on these inputs may not be readily available everywhere, and the opportunities for obtaining these elements are not evenly distributed across space. For example, Barrett et al. (2001) show that neighborhoods with a high concentration of ethnic minority populations are fruitful territories for businesses catering to specialized ethnic tastes because the local ethnic population can serve as the basis of a viable market for the ethnic enterprises. At the same time, both Fischer and Massey (2000) and Fairchild (2008) found that high levels of segregation have a negative influence on the likelihood of African American self-employment.

The map on page 7 shows where African American businesses are distributed in Mecklenburg County. We also conducted a location analysis for the 233 AA firms in Mecklenburg County. Using a negative binomial logistic regression, we examined the factors associated with AA firms’ spatial distribution (Table 2).
Overall, population density, ethnic diversity, percentage of AA population, gross rent and business density at the neighborhood level (measured by census tract) are significantly associated with the total number of AA firms in the same neighborhood. For example, AA firms are more likely to be located with existing firm clusters and less likely to be located in places with high population density. AA firms are highly concentrated in places with high ethnic diversities.

In particular, with an increase of 10 percent of the AA population in a neighborhood, the total number of AA firms in the same neighborhood will increase by 20 percent. Consistent with existing studies from across the country, this phenomenon indicates that AA firms are highly dependent on co-ethnic clientele. Previous research also argues that AA firms are more likely to hire co-ethnic population from the same neighborhood (Bates 2006). Consistently, some owners in the focus group discussion talked about hiring from local communities, “One of our client’s concerns and like most other companies that we deal with, their concerns are, are you going to bring people in to provide the service or are you going to hire people in that neighborhood? Absolutely we do.”

Higher numbers of AA firms are also positively associated with higher average gross rent in the same neighborhood. In our survey, when asked why an owner chose the current business location, the African American business owners prioritized the available space (43.8 percent) followed by affordable rent (37.5 percent). It is very likely that growth and development of AA firms contributes to property values in that neighborhood. Therefore, while AA firms depend highly on local community characteristics such as the consumer market and labor force, they are also meeting the consumers’ needs and contributing to local economic development.

### Overall Business Environment in Charlotte

In the survey (Figure 7), the majority of all businesses and the majority of AA firms indicate that they are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the overall business climate in the Charlotte region. When asked whether they desire to change locations, 66.7 percent of the AA respondents responded ‘No.’ But the overall pattern shows that the AA participants in the survey are a little less satisfied with Charlotte as an overall business environment. However in the focus group discussion, comments were mostly positive about the entrepreneurship environment in Charlotte. Specifically, participants felt that Charlotte is attractive for businesses due to its vibrant economy, lower cost of living, lower cost of doing business and because it “socially is just burgeoning.”

On the other hand, one particular comment about the Charlotte business environment from the focus group discussion is that Charlotte is “very cliquish.” One participant commented that, “The way that you do business in Charlotte is very different from the way you do business in other places because here, it’s who knows you, not who you know.” These comments reinforce the importance of networking for business owners. Indeed, in the survey, the majority of business owners stated that they usually network for future collaboration potential (62.5 percent). In the focus group discussion, almost all of the participants indicated that collaboration with other businesses is extremely important in order to assist each other. Types of collaboration include sharing market information, customer referrals, borrowing and sharing of equipment or simply keeping prospects open for future collaboration.

### Table 2: Neighborhood Characteristics Associated With the Number of AA Firms

| Characteristic               | b       | z       | P>|z|  | e^b   | e^bStdX | SDofX |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| Population Density          | -0.00008| -2.383  | 0.017 | 0.9999| 0.8734  | 1648.9239 |
| Ethnic Diversity            | 1.67242 | 5.818   | 0     | 5.3251 | 1.3698  | 25.3144   |
| Percentage of African       | 0.0181  | 8.443   | 0     | 1.0183 | 1.5814  | 25.3144   |
| Americans                  |         |         |       |       |         |       |
| Household Income            | -0.04529| -0.797  | 0.426 | 0.9557| 0.9418  | 1.3238    |
| Gross Rent                  | 0.12997 | 2.059   | 0.039 | 1.1388| 1.1782  | 1.262      |
| Business Density            | 0.00225 | 5.786   | 0     | 1.0023| 1.2858  | 111.7128   |
| Transportation/Utilities    | -0.01467| -1.103  | 0.27  | 0.9854| 0.913   | 6.2068     |
| (percent)                   |         |         |       |       |         |       |
| Manufacturing (percent)     | -0.00821| -0.51   | 0.61  | 0.9918| 0.9618  | 4.7451     |
| Trade (percent)             | -0.00996| -0.988  | 0.323 | 0.9901| 0.8804  | 12.7782    |
| FIRE (percent)              | -0.01929| -1.68   | 0.093 | 0.9809| 0.8608  | 7.7685     |
| Service (percent)           | -0.00424| -0.424  | 0.671 | 0.9958| 0.9471  | 12.815     |

Data source: Firm Survey
Certainly, networking or involvement with the local community is very important. Most minority business owners stated that they were involved in business organizations (68.4 percent), and a large section also responded that they were part of a church or religious organization (48.4 percent) or other type of organization, club or group (44.2 percent). Among the AA business owners, 73.9 percent stated that they were in a business organization. The largest difference between these two groups is the fact that a large proportion of AA business owners surveyed are involved in church and/or religious organizations (60.9 percent). Another notable difference is the higher percentage of all business owners who stated that they are not part of any organization (15.8 percent), compared to the AA owners, of which only 8.7 percent responded “No.”

Figure 8: Percentage of Involvement with Local Organizations/Agencies/Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, other type of organization</th>
<th>Yes, church/religious organization</th>
<th>Yes, other community organization</th>
<th>Yes, same-Ethnic group community</th>
<th>Yes, business organization</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Firm Survey

When asked if these organizations have benefited their businesses, 63.2 percent of all respondents said that they somewhat benefited their businesses, and 20.7 percent said that these organizations significantly benefited their businesses. The AA group had similar figures — 65.2 percent said that these organizations somewhat benefited their businesses, and 17.4 percent said that these organizations significantly benefited their businesses (Figure 9). Organizations mentioned most often as benefiting businesses include the National and Carolinas Minority Supplier Development Councils, the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Strength, Opportunities and Challenges

From both the survey and focus group discussions, participants agreed that small businesses are strong in many areas. For example, small businesses can react to market demand very quickly and flexibly. As a participant commented, "A little company can make a decision on a dime because it doesn't have to go through ranks." During the current economic downturn, a business owner said that, "This recession is nothing new to us. We were struggling before the recession, so we know how to struggle." In particular, AA business owners indicate that access to resources, especially to employees and the talent market, is particularly good.

African American business owners have also expressed a variety of challenges and obstacles that affect their day-to-day operations and long-term development.

- First of all, a key issue for African American businesses is dealing with finances. A large proportion of survey respondents and focus group participants expressed concern over the lack of capital for a business start-up or expansion.
- Secondly, the ability to attract clientele is also a concern for some of the businesses. Specifically, concerns were brought up about advertising, signage and lack of clients. Related to these, many business owners expressed difficulty in making connections with other businesses, getting collaboration opportunities and accessing relevant information.
- Perceived discrimination is another issue that African American business owners identified. While most business owners have acknowledged the strength of being an AA firm, some of them commented about the possibility of a misconception that ethnic minority owned businesses do not have the same level of quality. It is very rare to “close deals” with the majority of white owned companies. One participant shared that he had met...
with 32 white owned companies and closed only one deal; however, he met with 14 African American owned companies and closed six deals with four more in the pipeline. In particular, participants noted that there could be many contacts from white owned companies, but in most cases these contacts are not genuinely interested in collaboration but are simply a “pass-through” to meet minority goals set by particular government programs. While minority involvement is a requirement for many state and local government development programs (e.g., in Atlanta), it is only an “initiative” in our region. One business owner commented that, “There are no requirements. There are no set specific target goals that we see much success in this community and I can mirror what my colleagues are saying here this morning. We’ve been in business a long time, but our growth has been outside of the city.”

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Ethnic minority-owned businesses are becoming more and more important in the local economy of the greater Charlotte region. Compared to all minority-owned businesses (women-owned and all other ethnic minority-owned businesses), the African American businesses have shown the following characteristics:

- AA firms are highly concentrated in Administration and Support and Waste Management (26.4 percent); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (20.4 percent); and Construction (19.2 percent).
- AA owned businesses are more recently established.
- Facilities of AA firms are smaller in size (the AA average is half of the total average).
- The workforce of AA firms is smaller in size, with less full-time workers than the total group.
- There is a smaller proportion of AA owned businesses that provide full benefits to their employees.

In terms of location choices, AA firms are more likely to be located within existing firm clusters. Additionally, they are also highly concentrated in places with high ethnic diversities. In particular, a 10 percent increase in the AA population of a neighborhood results in an increase of the total number of AA firms in the same neighborhood by 20 percent. Additionally, on the one hand, AA firms are highly dependent on co-ethnic clientele and local communities, but on the other hand, they are also hiring from local communities, meeting the consumers’ demands and vitalizing local economic development.

The greater Charlotte region is attractive to businesses for its vibrant economy, lower cost of living, lower cost of doing business and for its burgeoning social environment. At the same time, a unique business environment requires social networking and high involvement with local business communities.

Access to capital is the most critical issue for most AA firms to start and expand their businesses. Attracting more customers to expand the market, making connections with other businesses and timely access to relevant information are the biggest challenges for AA firms to grow. African American business owners have also identified perceived discrimination as a key issue. In particular, they expressed that there is a lack of genuine interest in collaborating from the majority of white owned businesses.
Policy Recommendations Based on our Findings

First, we need to promote awareness of the contributions of ethnic minority-owned businesses. Small businesses are the backbone of the economy in our region. Ethnic minority-owned businesses are an important component. In addition, these businesses contribute to the socioeconomic upward mobility of the ethnic minority labor force and to the revitalization and economic development of ethnic minority concentrated neighborhoods. Systematic research and a comprehensive presentation of the contributions of minority owned businesses need to be promoted to both the local business communities and the general public.

Second, the programs that serve women and ethnic minority businesses must do a better job to address the obstacles that they are facing. There is an apparent lack of communication amongst these businesses, as well as insufficient communication between these businesses collectively with supporting communities and assistance programs. These deficiencies significantly contribute to diminished institutional capacity and gaps in transferring essential information as well as service delivery. Connecting these businesses to each other and to other key stakeholders could help to address the challenges that they are facing.

Specifically:
- Develop a database of information regarding resources and services for small businesses that can be accessed and/or distributed through a website that will address the information gap.
- Such a database will provide necessary information about markets, potential collaborators, workforce, supporting agencies and different programs. In particular, participants suggested that it “would be nice to make a requirement of businesses who come to Charlotte that they supply the contact person or at least provide dotted lines as to where you need to go.” As an example, the database built through this project will be very useful for location business communities. Indeed, we have received significant support and interest during the process of data collection.
- Develop stronger supporting organizations to provide information, training, technical assistance and liaisons between businesses and all other stakeholders.
- Encourage and develop stronger relationships between these businesses and banks and local financial institutions.
  - For instance, the Durham-based Latino Community Credit Union — the largest Hispanic-focused credit union in the United States — has been increasing its micro lending program to boost small businesses in North Carolina.
- Provide more avenues for social networking within local business communities across all ethnic groups and encourage communication between businesses and the supporting groups.

Third, while the typical economic development strategies such as tax abatements, subsidies and low-interest loans to businesses are creating a healthy and efficient entrepreneurial environment attractive to any business, it is necessary to create new or adjust existing programs...
oriented to the generation, stabilization, expansion and attraction of ethnic minority businesses to our region.

Fourth, there should be more education programs for minority business owners to help them better understand the business environment in Charlotte and encourage more connections and involvement with local agencies/organizations and local communities.

References


Thank you to our focus group companies:

Alpha Alarm Systems, Inc
Carolinas Minority Supplier Development Council
Charlotte Area Transit System
Charlotte Mecklenburg Black Chamber
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
City of Charlotte
Code LLC
Compass Group
DEW Electric LLC
Elite Delivery Service, Inc.
Environmental Service Systems LLC
Expense Reduction Analysts
FDY Inc.
Flowj LLC
It's My Affair
Kinloch Productions, Inc.
Latin American Chamber Of Commerce
Lowe's Companies, Inc.
Mecklenburg County (Minority, Women and Small Biz Enterprise Program)
Messer Construction Co.
Metro Staffing
Neighboring Concepts PLLC
Novant Health
Phoenix South Basketball
SCORE

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