

SMDO25

**SOUTH METRO
DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK CONFERENCE
CELEBRATING OVER 20 YEARS!**

INAUGURAL SMALL BUSINESS *Summit*

Presented by



FEBRUARY 19, 2025

2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

GEORGIA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER

SMDO25 SMALL BUSINESS *Summit*

The SMDO 1st Annual Small Business Summit is designed to provide small business owners, entrepreneurs, and local leaders with the tools, insights, and strategies needed to thrive in today's competitive landscape. This summit features a range of expert speakers discussing key topics including business innovation, access to capital, local business opportunities, and leveraging technology for growth.

OPENING

Welcome to the SMDO25 Small Business Summit

Michael Hightower

Managing Partner, The Collaborative Firm

Founder, South Metro Development Outlook Conference

Overview of Small Business Summit & Purpose

Montina Young-Fraiser

Founder, CIA Media Group, LLC

Introduce Keynote Speaker

Arnee Harrison

Senior Manager Business Development & Engagement

The Collaborative Firm

Keynote Address

Cassius F. Butts

Founder, Capital Fortitude Business Advisors

Former Region IV Administrator, United States Small Business Administration

SESSION I

Future Trends & Innovations: Insights from Amazon Sellers

This panel, featuring successful Amazon sellers, explores emerging trends, new tools, and strategies that are reshaping the way small businesses operate and scale on platforms like Amazon. Learn from the experiences of top sellers as they share their insights on navigating the evolving marketplace, leveraging cutting-edge technology, and staying ahead of the competition.

Rob Haralson - Moderator

Principal, Public Policy for the Americas, Amazon

Dean-Paul Hart

President, Compac Industries

Adria Marshall

Chief Executive Officer & Founder, Ecoslay



Michael Hightower



Cassius F. Butts



Arnee Harrison



Montina Young Fraiser

SESSION I



Moderator
Rob Haralson



Dean-Paul Hart



Adria Marshall

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SESSION II

Navigating Traditional and Nontraditional Financial Institutions

From bank loans and SBA programs to innovative fintech solutions and crowdfunding platforms, this session covers a wide range of avenues for securing capital from both traditional and nontraditional financial institutions. Panelists discuss the pros and cons of different funding sources, how to improve your business's chances of approval, and strategies for managing growth through smart financial decisions.

Montina Young-Fraiser - Moderator

Don Hunter

Business Community Officer, Bank of America

Jasmine Aimes

Commercial Loan Officer, Access Capital for Entrepreneurs

Earl Camp

Vice President, Business Development, NOW Corp

SESSION III

How to Acquire New Clients: Strategies for Small Business Growth

In this panel, industry experts share proven strategies and best practices for attracting and retaining customers. From effective marketing techniques and leveraging social media to building strong referral networks and creating compelling sales pitches, panelists provide actionable insights to help you expand your client base.

Cassius F. Butts - Moderator

Melvin Coleman

Chief Executive Officer & President, Atlanta Black Chambers

Roz Lewis

President, Greater Women's Business Council

Oz Nesbitt

President & Chief Executive Officer, Speak Up Communications

Lisa Guadalupe Clarke

Founder & Chief Executive Officer, ATL Search Group Latinas Rise

SESSION II



Moderator
Montina Young Fraiser



Don Hunter



Jasmine Aimes



Earl Camp

SESSION III



Moderator
Cassius F. Butts



Melvin Coleman



Roz Lewis



Oz Nesbitt



Lisa Guadalupe Clarke

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SESSION IV

Securing Local Business Opportunities:

How to Navigate Municipal Bids and Proposals

This panel provides small business owners with the essential knowledge and strategies needed to tap into local government opportunities. Experts guide you through the process of doing business with municipalities, including how to identify opportunities, navigate the complexities of submitting competitive proposals, and understand the key factors that make a winning bid. Learn best practices for preparing your business to compete for contracts, tips for building strong relationships with local government officials, and how to position your company as a trusted partner for public sector projects.

Montina Young-Fraiser-Moderator

Walter Vinson

*Assistant General Manager, Business Diversity & Government Affairs,
Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport*

Viktor Opara-Amaechi

*Assistant Administrator, External Programs, Georgia Department of
Transportation*

Tamisha McKenzie

Contract Compliance Manager, Central Services, Clayton County

Conference Wrap-Up

Michael Hightower

Networking Reception

SESSION IV



Moderator
Montina Young Fraiser



Walter Vinson



Viktor Opara-Amaechi



Tamisha McKenzie

Want the latest updates on South Metro's economic development, networking opportunities, and key industry insights?

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