



Impact Report

Laying the Groundwork for Inclusive Economic Growth

2023 - 2024

Overview

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We envision a future where economic inclusion is not an afterthought, but a foundational principle woven into regional growth strategies.





Executive Director Insight

As we enter 2025, EDABC is building on the strong foundation laid in our inaugural year, advancing workforce development, business growth, and policy advocacy to create lasting economic impact.

- **Our mission remains clear—to connect, convene, and catalyze opportunities that ensure Black professionals, entrepreneurs, and communities can thrive.**

In 2024, we achieved significant milestones, including **national recognition for workforce development, strategic partnerships with key industries, and policy leadership in economic equity and procurement strategies. We helped shape Denver's Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), launched an educational series on business expansion, and engaged state and national leaders on **inclusive economic policies.

Looking ahead, 2025 will focus on scaling our impact through the launch of our membership program, the development of a Black Economic Data Center, and the expansion of leadership committees driving initiatives in real estate, quantum technology, and financial equity. Additionally, our Black Purchasing Power Research Project, in partnership with the University of Denver, will guide strategies for wealth-building and investment in Black communities.

With our long-term vision toward 2050, we are laying the groundwork for a fully inclusive economy where Black communities are positioned to lead, innovate, and drive systemic change. Your continued engagement and collaboration are essential to making this vision a reality. Join us as a member, partner, or advocate, and help shape the future of Black economic empowerment.

Jice Johnson

Jice Johnson
Executive Director

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Building the Foundation for Change

Our mission is clear:

- » To be the region's connector, convener, and catalyst for economic change.

We are committed to:

- » Developing workforce strategies that open pathways to high-growth careers for Black professionals
- » Laying the foundation for a thriving Black business ecosystem through research, partnerships, and advocacy
- » Advocating for policies that promote economic equity and create long-term wealth-building opportunities



Economic growth is not truly successful unless all people have access to the opportunities, capital, and resources needed to thrive.

In our inaugural year, the Economic Development Association for Black Communities (EDABC) began laying the groundwork for a new, more inclusive approach to economic development in Metro Denver. As the first member-driven, full-service economic development organization of its kind in the Rocky Mountain region, we are working to establish the strategies, partnerships, and policies that will drive economic growth, business expansion, and workforce opportunities for Black communities.

In our Pilot Year, we focused on building relationships, gathering data, and setting strategic priorities that will guide our work in the years ahead. Below, we share the progress we've made and the next steps in our journey toward economic empowerment.

A New Approach to Economic Development

Traditional economic development models have often prioritized large-scale investments and top-down decision-making—frequently overlooking Black

and other underrepresented communities. These approaches have not fully addressed the systemic barriers that limit access to quality jobs, business capital, and wealth-building opportunities.

At EDABC, we are committed to a new model of economic development—one centered on inclusivity and data-driven decision-making. While we are still in the early stages of defining our approach, we are focused on ensuring that:

- » Black professionals are not just job seekers—they have pathways to leadership in high-growth industries.
- » Black businesses don't just exist—they are positioned to scale, thrive, and attract investment.
- » Economic policies don't just affect Black communities—they are informed by Black leaders and entrepreneurs.

Our first year has been about listening, learning, and building relationships to ensure our strategies are rooted in community needs and positioned for long-term impact.

Our Three Pillars of Impact

+ At EDABC, we are laying the groundwork in three core pillars that will guide our programs and initiatives:

01

Workforce Development

Exploring strategies to create career pathways for Black professionals in high-growth industries

Building relationships with businesses committed to equitable hiring and workforce development

Gathering insights to inform a data-driven workforce strategy

Progress to Date:

National Recognition

Selected for the Good Jobs Learning Collaborative, where we are working to develop strategies that improve job quality and career advancement.

Tech Industry Engagement

Partnered with the Elevate Quantum TechHub consortium to assess workforce needs in quantum computing and related fields.

Workforce Research & Strategy

Engaged with the Colorado Semiconductor Industry Partnership and held a Black Tech Talent focus group to explore pathways into high-growth industries.

02

Business Growth, Attraction & Retention

Developing a foundation to increase access to capital and resources for Black entrepreneurs

Identifying opportunities to strengthen Black business networks and economic inclusion

Providing education and connections that help business owners explore pathways for growth

Progress to Date:

Regional Leadership

Played a role in shaping the Denver Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to ensure Black businesses were represented in regional planning.

Educational Initiatives

Launched a webinar series on Business Mergers, Acquisitions, and Expansions, providing foundational knowledge for Black entrepreneurs.

National Influence

Contributed to the New Growth Innovation Network's Inclusive Procurement Best Practices roundtable, shaping national discussions on equitable procurement.

03

Policy Advocacy

Building relationships with policymakers to advance economic equity

Ensuring Black voices are represented in legislative and policy discussions

Exploring leadership development opportunities to increase Black representation in policymaking

Progress to Date:

Legislative Engagement

Hosted our 1st and 2nd Colorado Legislative Preview Breakfasts, convening state leaders to discuss economic equity, small business policy, and workforce development.

Leadership Development

Partnered with local, aligned organizations for two Black Leaders Under the Dome events, connecting Black leaders with policymakers.

Policy Engagement

Continued monitoring and engaging in economic development legislation to inform our long-term policy strategy.

Building an Infrastructure for Long-Term Impact



Launching Our Membership Program

Our membership model is designed to bring together business leaders, policymakers, and community advocates who are committed to economic equity. edaforblackcommunities.com/membership/

Member Benefits:

- » Access to exclusive workshops & networking events
- » Direct involvement in shaping policy & economic initiatives
- » A collective voice in driving systemic change
- » Interested in joining? Sign up today at edaforblackcommunities.com/membership/.

Research & Data: Laying the Groundwork for Data-Driven Solutions

To guide our strategies, we partnered with the University of Denver to launch the Black Purchasing Power Research Project, exploring how Black purchasing power can be leveraged for wealth creation and policy development.

Key Insights:

- » Black purchasing power is a significant economic force that remains underutilized in wealth-building efforts.
- » Systemic factors like inflation, homeownership barriers, and student debt influence financial stability.
- » Policy recommendations from this research will inform our next steps in capital access and community investment initiatives.

Strengthening Leadership for the Future

To ensure we are equipped for long-term impact, we invested in strategic learning opportunities for our Board of Directors.

Key Leadership Development Initiatives:

- » *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report* – Provided insights on workforce trends to guide our approach to Black talent development.
- » *Economic Development 101* – Partnered with the Economic Development Council of Colorado to build foundational knowledge on inclusive economic development.
- » *Inaugural Board Retreat* – Focused on strategic planning to shape EDABC's vision and next steps.



Board Members

2023 - 2024

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Jice Johnson
Board Chair



Charlyn Moss
Treasurer



Michael Washington
Secretary



Andre Cunningham
Board Member



Charles Gilford
Board Member



Zaneta Kelsey
Board Member



Aisha Weeks
Board Member



Simone Ross
Board Member



Isaiah Alexander
Board Member



Kavi Ramocan
Board Member



Adrina Gibson
Board Member



Topazz Johnson-McBride
Board Member

Looking Ahead

A VISION FOR 2050

EDABC is developing a comprehensive, long-term economic development strategy that will guide our work through 2050. While we are still in the early stages of planning, we are laying the groundwork by:

- » Establishing a 501(c)(3) arm of EDABC – Expanding our capacity to provide research, education, and workforce development initiatives.
- » Strengthening our Board & Committees – Building a fully engaged leadership team with dedicated working groups on real estate, mergers & acquisitions, quantum technology, and financial equity.
- » Growing Membership & Engagement – Expanding our network of businesses, professionals, and policy advocates to 100+ members by the end of 2025.
- » Launching a Data & Research Hub – Developing a Black Economic Data Center to centralize research on business trends, workforce insights, and policy impacts.
- » Advancing Our Core Pillar-Based Initiatives – Scaling our Workforce Development, Business Growth, and Policy Advocacy programs to drive lasting economic impact.

These initiatives will serve as the foundation for a comprehensive 2050 plan—one that envisions a fully inclusive economy where Black communities are leading, innovating, and thriving.

Thank you to our supporters:



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Administration

ROSE COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



The Denver
Foundation



The Colorado
Health Foundation™



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Join Us in Building a **Thriving** Future

We are proud of the groundwork laid in our first year, and we recognize that the real work is just beginning. To turn our vision into reality, we need you—our members, partners, and allies—to stand with us.

Get Involved Today:

1

Become a Member – Help shape the future of inclusive economic development!

2

Partner with Us – Let's collaborate to expand economic opportunities!

3

Attend Our Events – Stay engaged and informed.

4

Support Our Work – Your contribution helps us build lasting impact.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are laying the foundation for a more equitable future.

www.edaforblackcommunities.com



Be a Catalyst for Change
True economic progress happens when leaders,
businesses, and communities come together to
drive systemic change.

The Disclosure

The Economic Development Association for Black Communities (EDABC) is committed to transparency and accuracy in reporting our progress. This report reflects our ongoing efforts, foundational work, and strategic priorities as we develop long-term economic development initiatives. While we have made significant strides in building partnerships, engaging stakeholders, and shaping policy discussions, many of the programs and initiatives outlined here are in various stages of planning and implementation.

This report should not be interpreted as a guarantee of outcomes but rather as an overview of the work we are doing to establish sustainable economic pathways for Black communities. As we continue to refine our strategies, engage with partners, and collect data, we remain dedicated to advancing economic equity and driving meaningful, measurable impact.

For further information or inquiries, please contact us at hello@edaforblackcommunities.com or visit www.edaforblackcommunities.com

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