

# IN YOUR WORDS: 48 BLACK BUSINESS OWNERS IN NORTHEAST WISCONSIN SPEAK

We asked 48 Black business owners about their business experience.

## OUR PURPOSE



To learn about your experiences as business owners - success, challenges, support system, financing, motivations, mentors - with a race equity lens.



What's unique and important to know about Black business owners in a white area?



To summarize what you tell us and transition that into:

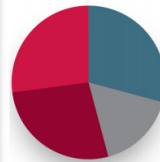
- Meaningful support for you and your business
- Fact Sheets, Presentations, Articles



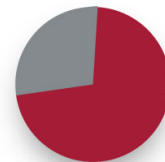
In order to inform:

- Economic Development Practitioners
- Extension Educators
- Researchers
- Other Business Owners
- Community Members
- Policy makers

## PARTICIPANTS



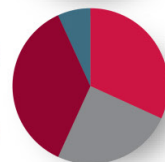
**County**  
 Brown - 14  
 Outagamie - 15  
 Winnebago - 13  
 Fond du Lac - 6



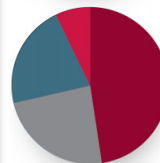
**Gender**  
 Male - 33  
 Female - 15



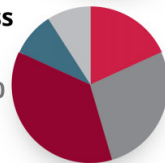
**Education**  
 HS Diploma - 20  
 Associates - 12  
 Bachelors - 11  
 Masters/PhD - 5



**Number of employees**  
 Self | 15  
 1 | 12  
 2-9 | 18  
 10+ | 3



**Annual Business Income**  
 \$24,999 or less  
 \$25,000-\$100,000  
 \$100,000  
 No Answer



**Age**  
 18-29 | 8  
 30-39 | 15  
 40-49 | 17  
 50-59 | 4  
 60+ | 4

## WHAT WE'RE LEARNING FROM YOU

### MOTIVATIONS: WHY DID YOU START THIS BUSINESS?

To benefit the community, the Black community in particular

To work hard for myself

To create a legacy for my kids

To be a role model for my kids and others who see me

To obtain satisfactory employment

To pass wealth on to the future generation

To make my own decisions

To have independence

To have more flexibility than I could in a regular 9-5

### COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT: WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A BLACK BUSINESS OWNER HERE?

I know I stand out.

Challenging

Lonely

**I'm a Black man in a white man's world.**

I don't think about it.

Just like anywhere

I am building trust by demonstrating integrity over time.

## ADDING TO THE SCHOLARSHIP ABOUT BLACK ENTREPRENEURS

- There are few formal research studies of Black entrepreneurship, and only 1 in Wisconsin.
- The few organizations supporting Black business owners are in Milwaukee and Madison.
- Little data on progress or impact

## ACCESS TO RESOURCES: HOW DID YOU FINANCE YOUR BUSINESS?

From my own savings

Working another job at the same time

Trusting relationships: the landlord gave me a few months free.

Smart shopping: I purchased used shelving.

## FEW USED BANK LOANS.

### DID YOU WORK WITH A BANK OR CREDIT UNION?

No, I don't like to have loans.

I don't think they would lend to me.

I tried, but they wouldn't loan to me.



**Extension**  
 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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 because race matters



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