



Mayor Dickens joins community leaders to talk franchises, economic opportunity

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens welcomed the International Franchise Association Monday for a discussion of how business franchises can be a greater source of economic opportunity for Atlantans.

The mayor was joined by leaders of key groups representing underserved communities, including Keith Millner, chairman of 100 Black Men of Atlanta; Alejandro Coss, president and CEO of the Latin American Chamber of Commerce; Veronica Maldonado-Torres, president and CEO of the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; and Michael J. Baptiste, Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the Metro Atlanta Chamber. The “Open for Opportunity” event was at The Gathering Spot.

Mayor Dickens said business owners need better financial literacy. He cited a study showing two-third of business owners in the city felt solid financially, yet in a later question half said they couldn’t handle an unexpected \$3,000 expense, such as a stove that needed to be replaced.

He said his office is ‘here to help, ’entrepreneurs succeed and grow.

Millner, from the 100 Black Men of Atlanta, said too many people don’t grasp the benefits of owning a business.

“With many of my coaching clients and within the African-American community, I often see the lack of a Growth Mindset — they don’t understand the potential benefits of entrepreneurship,” said Millner, who is a Jersey Mike’s franchisee and owner of the coaching firm Coaching Catalyst LLC. “Often, they can identify many risks, but not the rewards.”

Only a quarter of franchises are quick-service restaurants, IFA noted. The others three-quarters include businesses such as childcare, home improvement, fitness services and hair salons. National brands make up just 16% of the market, while local brands make up 50% of independent franchise brands.

About 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc.

100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc. is a non-profit organization providing college preparatory services and mentorship to at-risk, Atlanta youth through its flagship program Project Success. Since its inception in

1987, 100% of the students who complete Project Success have graduated from high school and 80% have graduated from college in four years, far outpacing the national averages.

Project Success is differentiated by the strength of its civic-minded mentors who comprise the membership of the organization. Members dedicate their time and talent to helping boys and girls break the cycles of poverty, under-achievement and violence that plague their communities thus enabling them to seek their highest potential.

Visit www.100blackmen-atlanta.org for information and to make charitable contributions to Project Success.

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