

# The Tulsa Initiative Proposal

## Mission

The Tulsa Initiative, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization ([tulsanonprofit.org](http://tulsanonprofit.org)) and is the parent organization of the Tulsa Leadership & Entrepreneurship Academy. The mission of our institution is to cultivate young minds and prepare them to change lives through utilization of mentorship and education.

## Organization

The Tulsa Initiative was established in 2019 by Black entrepreneurs and industry leaders to address three critical challenges impacting our society; how can we educate the public about the inequalities Black entrepreneurs face, how can we empower African Americans so they understand the value of circulating the Black dollar in Black communities, and how can we enable African Americans to create a value-cycle to invest in Black entrepreneurs. We created our roadmap with the millennials and Generation Z in mind and designed it as a global digital leadership & entrepreneurship program. Our carefully planned innovative program calls for introducing our students to positive role models, developing leadership skills, and building positive attitudes and a healthy mindset. Our vision is to make a significant and long-lasting generational impact in the Black community by producing entrepreneurial leaders.

The Tulsa Initiative Inc. derives its name from the roots of Black entrepreneurship on Black Wall Street. The Greenwood District in Tulsa, OK was one of the most prominent concentrations of African American businesses in the U.S. during the early 20th century and was popularly known as America's "Black Wall Street". Unfortunately, it was burned to the ground in the Tulsa race massacre of 1921, in which an estimated 150-300 almost entirely Black community members were killed.

## Need In Fayetteville, NC.

- Fayetteville median family income is nearly \$10,000 less than the state average and \$20,000 less than the national average (World Population Review)
- Blacks make up 13% of the U.S. population. Yet, they account for only 3.5% of America's business owners
- The number one reason discouraging Black business ownership is the lack of capital, particularly start-up capital.
- The racial wealth gap in the U.S. is a persistent chasm. In 2019, the median net worth of Black households was \$24,000, significantly less than \$189,000 for white households. This sizable gap in financial wealth creates a cascade of inequalities in education, homeownership, and savings, and is life-long. While the solutions to these enormous problems are multi-pronged, entrepreneurship provides the best opportunity to build sustainable, long-term wealth. The same study reports that Black-owned companies

have created over 1 million jobs and generated over \$165 billion in revenue.

- A LendingTree study found that Fayetteville has the highest percentage of Black-owned businesses with 11.2% of businesses being Black-owned.
- For the study, analysts compared the total number of businesses to the amount of Black-owned businesses in 50 U.S. metropolitan regions with the most Black-owned businesses (Fayetteville Observer)

For the United States to continue to lead, innovate, and generate jobs, we need to improve the prospects for survival and growth of businesses founded by minorities. Increasing the rate of minority entrepreneurship helps to reduce longstanding race wealth gaps, income and wealth inequality, and to facilitate social mobility. Increasing business formation by minority entrepreneurs is critical to improving the rate of entrepreneurship overall in the U.S. If we are to grow as a country, create opportunities, and make progress on improving income and wealth equality, we need to have programs to help minority entrepreneurs succeed

### Theory of Change and Impact

Having the proper skills to establish and run a business is critically important for start-up businesses, which usually operate on slim margins. The same is especially true for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) -owned businesses. Research suggests that increasing the rate of BIPOC entrepreneurship may actually worsen the racial wealth gap, due to the economic cost associated with business closure. BIPOC-owned businesses are less likely to remain open within 4 years, as compared to white-owned businesses. Due to this disproportionality, BIPOC business owners are more likely to experience downward economic mobility and less likely to experience upward mobility, as compared to their white counterparts. For these reasons, our project is targeted at improving the rate at which Black entrepreneurs succeed, rather than increasing the rate at which BIPOC people become entrepreneurs.

The project is designed to provide systematic training to BIPOC youth in the area of business ownership. The main objective of our program is to cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit in youth, and make them aware of business ownership as something realistically attainable. The program will provide BIPOC entrepreneurs with education, mentorship, potential internships, support, and help to develop and inspire interpersonal skills such as self-confidence, self-esteem, self-concept, and the opportunity to explore and pursue entrepreneurship.

Our project is evidence-based and employs three main approaches to teaching youth entrepreneurship skills:

- Entrepreneurship Education: We offer programs and seminars providing an introduction to the values and basics of creating and running businesses. These programs guide BIPOC entrepreneurs through the development of a business plan. They also include simulations of business start-up and operation.
- Enterprise Development: Our programs provide support and services that incubate and help BIPOC entrepreneurs develop their own businesses. We also go beyond entrepreneurship education by introducing BIPOC entrepreneurs to small loans or grants

needed for start-up and by providing more individualized attention to the development of viable business ideas.

- **Experiential Programs:** We offer mentorship and programs providing BIPOC entrepreneurs with placement and experience in the day-to-day operation of a business. These programs involve simulation of the development of a BIPOC-owned business that participants work in and manage. They may also provide placement in apprentice or internship positions with adult entrepreneurs in the community.

## The Tulsa Leadership and Entrepreneurship Academy (TLEA) Model

TLEA is a results-based entrepreneurship program for young BIPOC men. The program focuses on building safe and supportive communities for young men of color where they feel valued and have clear pathways to opportunity. Cohorts of young male adults (ages 18-24) follow a 10-week curriculum, which teaches entrepreneurial mindsets and skills in a wide variety of settings. At the end of the program, participants will be invited to pitch live in our Tulsa Initiative Pitch competition to win funds for their business.

The program is built on the following pillars:

- The history of BIPOC entrepreneurship;
- Importance of entrepreneurship in the BIPOC community;
- Developing a brand image and how to market your brand
- Understanding the foundation of business, ethics, and innovation;
- Understanding the pitch & marketing/branding businesses
- Business research and competitive analysis,
- Personal Finances and funding your business; and
- Building a winning team

Tulsa has helped over 75+ young entrepreneurs and businesses, provided over \$30,000 in funding/consultations to businesses, helped 9 entrepreneurs become full-time business owners, 350+ hours of mentorship provided to BIPOC, and facilitated over 1000+ students/faculty empowerment and education sessions through our Tulsa Speaks workshops.

## SCHEDULE AND MILESTONES

Spring 2023: Inaugural Fayetteville TLEA cohort starts (Fall and Spring cohorts thereafter)

Fall 2023: Tulsa Pitch Competition kicks off

2023: Strategic partnerships with area institutes of higher education and local businesses

2023: Tulsa Speaks kicks off

2024: Tulsa Youth Entrepreneurship Summit and Mini-Tulsa Shark Tank kick off

## OUTCOMES

The proposed project will provide young BIPOC entrepreneurship education and informal education opportunities to support student academic achievement, develop business and entrepreneurial skills, and improve personal and social skills.

Outcome	Goal	Assessment Tool	Assessment Timeline
New BIPOC entrepreneurs who are ready to establish their own business	Cohorts of entrepreneurs who received a quality entrepreneurship education	Enrollment records	Biannual
Improved entrepreneurial skills (analytical skills, communication skills, presentation skills, ability to evaluate business ideas, ability to deal with uncertainty, level of risk tolerance)	80% of participants will improve entrepreneurial skills	Self-reflection surveys, interviews, exit surveys	Before program entry and at program exit

## Budget Request

TLEA and Pitch Competition Program Budget Request

\$50,000.00 per year for Two Years

Total of \$100,000

## Evaluation

All Programs will be evaluated at key intervals.

Quarterly formative evaluations will be used to review, reflect, and modify program goals and intended outcomes quarterly.

Annual summative evaluations (Annual Report) will document achieved outcomes.

- Program metrics will include (but are not limited to):
- # of participants in each programs

- # of Mentors
- # of programs (and participant evaluation of programs)
- # of Campus-based programs (in-person)
- # of Speakers
- # of Partnerships
- # of entrepreneurs that start a business

## Key Personnel

Our executive team has decades of non-profit management and entrepreneurship experience and an excellent track record of executing complex projects. Qu'Derrick and Manuel will be responsible for the overall success of the project, monitoring and evaluation, partnerships, outreach, and enrollment.

Qu' Derrick R. Covington born and raised in Fayetteville, N.C. is a well sought-after speaker, presenter, leadership development coach and mentor who has traveled the nation to speak to crowds of more than 3000. In 2018, Qu' Derrick was acknowledged as one of the most prominent voices of his generation and could impact the lives of all ages. In 2016, He was invited to our nation's capital by Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge to discuss voting rights and other Important Issues facing today's Millennials. In 2022, He was invited to present at the White House to discuss the need to diversify Ocean Science in Black and Brown communities, focusing on HBCUs and MSIs. Qu' Derrick is a two-time HBCU graduate, and he now attends Howard University pursuing a Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership and Policy.

Mr. Covington currently serves as the Chief Diversity Officer of the Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO), which provides interactive workshops, seminars, and at-sea experiences for more than ten thousand students nationwide. Qu' Derrick brings experience in developing, managing, and evaluating DE&I-focused retention and mentoring programs. In 2019, Mr. Covington started The Tulsa Initiative, Inc. to serve Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) making a significant positive impact in Black and Brown entrepreneurs businesses.

Manuel Fleming, II born and raised in Fayetteville, NC. Manuel is an accomplished entrepreneur and the co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of the Tulsa Initiative. Manuel is an Assistant Vice President at Bank of America. Manuel is the co-owner of Liger Transport, LLC., located in Charlotte, NC.

Danny Wooten Jr. is the Director of Programs of the Tulsa Initiative. He is a graduate of Fayetteville State University and holds a M.Ed. degree with an emphasis on Leadership in Higher Education from Northcentral University and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education degree in Organizational Leadership with an emphasis on Higher Education Leadership at the Grand Canyon University. Danny's long-term research interests include understanding the factors that contribute to the undergraduate academic success of students who are raised by single African-American parents with no post-secondary education experience.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

NOV 18 2019

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(877) 829-5500  
Accounting Period Ending:  
December 31  
Public Charity Status:  
509(a)(2)  
Form 990/990-EZ/990-N Required:  
Yes  
Effective Date of Exemption:  
September 25, 2019  
Contribution Deductibility:  
Yes  
Addendum Applies:  
No

Dear Applicant:

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status. Please keep it for your records.

Organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined you're a public charity under the IRC Section listed at the top of this letter.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that you're required to file Form 990/990-EZ/990-N, our records show you're required to file an annual information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ) or electronic notice (Form 990-N, the e-Postcard). If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization, go to [www.irs.gov/charities](http://www.irs.gov/charities). Enter "4221-PC" in the search bar to view Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, which describes your recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements.

Letter 947