

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Why is there a need for a National Black Chamber of Commerce?**

There was no voice representing the specific needs or addressing the specific issues of the African American entrepreneur. There was no entity encouraging straight up interaction and trade in the Black Diaspora. Since the founding of the NBCC there has been over 4 billion dollars in contracts let to Black businesses because of the efforts of the NBCC. Legislation, policy, corporate commitment and total advocacy on behalf of black business are now in place. The amount of small business loans given to Black entrepreneurs on an annual basis has tripled.

#### **I want to start a new business, how can the NBCC assist me?**

The NBCC does not actively assist start-ups. We do provide a Small Business Financial Resources Guide which gives you information on how to start a business.

[Click here to view the guide](#)

#### **How do I become a NBCC member?**

[Click here for General Membership Form](#)

#### **What are the benefits of NBCC Membership?**

Member Benefits.... [link](#)

#### **How do I start a NBCC chapter?**

Please follow the steps below (in order of importance):

- Join the NBCC as an Chapter Member
- Fill out the IRS SS-4 application, call it in, and receive your federal tax ID number
- Incorporate as a nonprofit corporation in your applicable state
- Receive membership certificate from the NBCC
- Write and adopt your by-laws (using the NBCC generic guidelines)
- Apply for IRS 501©3 status
- Develop local strategic plan with compatibility to the National plan
- Implement your programs

### **I'm a member of my local chamber of commerce. Does that automatically make me a member of the National Black Chamber?**

No, the National Black Chamber of Commerce is not a parent organization of the state and local chambers. You will need to apply for a separate membership in the National Black Chamber of Commerce.

### **What's the difference between the National Black Chamber of Commerce and my state or local chamber?**

Local and state chambers emulate the National Black Chamber of Commerce. The National Black Chamber of Commerce focuses on federal issues while state chambers focus on state issues and local chambers focus on local issues.

### **Can I get a list of NBCC members?**

The National Black Chamber of Commerce does not distribute information about our members to protect their privacy.

### **What kinds of organizations join the National Black Chamber of Commerce?**

Businesses of every size and industry, state and local chambers of commerce, and trade and professional associations are National Black Chamber of Commerce members.

### **Will you send me information on visiting or living in Washington, DC?**

The National Black Chamber of Commerce does not provide tourism or relocation information. For information on visiting Washington, DC [Click here](#)

### **Can you provide statistics on buying power, data on expenditure category and disposable personal income?**

Please check with the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Selig Center at the University of Georgia for buying power statistics on all races.

### **National Black Chamber of Commerce v. US Black Chamber, Inc. Litigation**

#### **1) What is the National Black Chamber of Commerce?**

The National Black Chamber of Commerce ("NBCC") is a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC. President/CEO Harry Alford and Executive Vice President Kay DeBow established the National Black Chamber of Commerce ("NBCC") in 1993 to represent the interests of Black-owned businesses, promote entrepreneurship and make a stronger, diversified America. Now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year of existence, NBCC has a longstanding reputation for promoting, empowering, educating, and providing resources and opportunities for black-owned businesses on local, state, regional, national and international levels. NBCC has grown to be the largest Black-owned business association in the world, with over 140 chapters nationwide and chapters in Brazil, Africa and Europe.

#### **2) How does the National Black Chamber of Commerce accomplish its mission?**

The National Black Chamber of Commerce strives to achieve its mission through these primary activities: a) education and advocacy on a variety of issues such as civil rights, global climate legislation, and tax laws; b) publication of resources such as the *Convention Journal* and *The Small Business Resource Guide*; c) hosting of an annual convention that brings together hundreds of Black-owned businesses, corporate executives and government officials and others for relationship-building and information-sharing opportunities; d) establishment of international trade missions to promote global trade by Black-owned businesses; e) consultation to corporations and government entities concerning their outreach and diversity expansion on specific projects or daily procurement policy; f) training on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act; g) promotion of its members to raise the visibility of black-owned businesses; and h) representation of its organization, members and other Black-owned businesses in advocacy efforts for access to government contracts.

In addition, the National Black Chamber of Commerce is committed to the principles of this nation and its citizens, as exemplified by its work to rebuild the Gulf Coast after the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina. Immediately after the disaster and for the next three years, NBCC's leaders made over 75 trips to the impacted area and reinvigorated its chapters in Lafayette, Baton Rouge, Monroe and Shreveport. For New Orleans and Mississippi, NBCC started from scratch by forming the New Orleans Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Mississippi Black Chamber of Commerce in Jackson. NBCC leaders also met with President George W. Bush, as well as local, state and federal officials, and requested much-needed assistance for the region. NBCC earned more than \$3 billion in contracts for its Katrina Disaster recovery work and helped grow Black-owned businesses throughout Louisiana and Mississippi during this time.

### **3) How is the NBCC's relationship with the current Administration?**

The NBCC represents the interests of Black-owned businesses, regardless of which political party is in power. The NBCC has had several productive meetings with the White House and looks forward to future discussions with the Obama Administration about the various issues that impact its members.

More generally, since the founding of the organization, the National Black Chamber of Commerce has worked to build strategic relationships with a broad spectrum of groups, policymakers, thought-leaders, and regulators. These relationships all have one common goal and that is to help elevate the conversation around access and equity for black-owned businesses. This issues-based approach means that NBCC is not on one-side of the political spectrum or another. As such, NBCC has and will continue to foster relationships with political and business leaders, regardless of where they fall on the political spectrum, in order to advance its members' interests.

### **4) Why is the National Black Chamber of Commerce suing the US Black Chamber, Inc.?**

The National Black Chamber of Commerce filed suit against the US Black Chamber, Inc. to protect its intellectual property rights. The suit was filed on October 18, 2010, in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Case No. 1:10-cv-1755, and alleges Trademark Infringement, in violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1114(1); False Designation of Origin and Unfair Competition in Violation of the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a); Trademark Dilution in Violation of the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. §1125(c)(1); and Unfair Competition in Violation of District of Columbia Common Law.

### **5) What prompted the timing of this lawsuit?**

As stated in NBCC's pleadings, it believes that the US Black Chamber, Inc. adopted that name in April 2010. In that same month, NBCC contacted the US Black Chamber, Inc., and requested that it discontinue using the confusingly similar mark and any other marks that might infringe NBCC's federally protected mark. The US Black Chamber, Inc. refused, despite evidence of public confusion, among other things. As such, the NBCC had no choice but to file suit a short time later.

### **6) What damages, if any, are being sought?**

The National Black Chamber of Commerce is seeking all available remedies under the law, including injunctive relief and damages.

### **7) What is the next step in the case?**

On June 6, 2011, the Court ruled on various motions that the parties had filed in the case. Specifically, the Court denied defendant Ronald Busby's motion to dismiss NBCC's amended complaint, holding that the amended complaint stated plausible claims for relief against defendant Busby. The Court also granted NBCC's second motion for leave to amend its complaint with additional factual allegations. We cannot provide any additional information, given that this matter is in litigation.

### **8) Do you have a timeline for the case?**

It is not possible to determine or guess how long this process will take. There are many variables, many of which will be decided by the Court.

### **9) What does the NBCC think about the recent legal troubles of the US Black Chamber, Inc.'s former Treasurer?**

The NBCC has no comment on former or current employees of the US Black Chamber, Inc., given the pending litigation.