

2012 WILLMAR AREA AFRICAN BUSINESS SURVEY

FINDINGS REPORT - PUBLIC RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 6, 2012



**African
Development
Center**
of Minnesota



ADC Main Office
1931 South 5th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55454
tel 1-877-232-4775
fax 1-877-853-3233

ADC Rochester
415 16th Street SW
Rochester, MN 55902
tel 507-282-7333

ADC Willmar
415 16th Street SW
Willmar, MN 56201
tel 507-282-7333

2104 Hwy 12 East
Willmar, MN 56201

P: 320-235-0300
F: 320-231-1948

www.willmarareachamber.com

2012 WILLMAR AREA AFRICAN BUSINESS SURVEY

SURVEY SUMMARY

Purpose

The purpose of this regional survey was to serve as a mechanism to **begin to compare** the status of this new and growing business community of African-owned establishments with the larger business community of the region, as well as **increase awareness** in the larger community to the presence and **potential** of this new business group. This was done by attempting to determine: the **overall health** of these businesses, areas of **success and challenges**, opportunities for **growth**, current **network** utilization and capacity, and **assistance needs** from groups like ADC and the WLA.

Details

In all, **11 local businesses** were surveyed on questions in the categories of: **Owner Education / Experience, Financial Health, Perceived Challenges, Regional Opportunities**, and the **Use of Regional Services and Networks**. The contents of this survey, as well as the full Findings Report can be accessed at www.adcminnesota.org.

Findings

- ❖ Business ownership in the African community is experiencing a **recent growth trend**
 - 91% established within the past 5 years
- ❖ Majority of owners (64%) have **completed High School** - only one with a **Bachelor's Degree**
- ❖ A trend of **diversity growing in business sectors** represented
- ❖ **Small Business category** dominates with a significant **economic impact** on the community
 - Roughly 23 full-time jobs have been created by these businesses (100% African-immigrants)
 - 16 part-time jobs have been created (77% African-immigrants)
- ❖ Majority of surveyed (90%) are **optimistic** that financial future of the business will either remain at current levels or increase (with over 40% predicting revenue increases)

Challenges

- ❖ **Employee benefits** are essentially nonexistent for both part and full-time employees
- ❖ Stability and growth may become an issue if more **financing options** are not made available
 - While only 10% of those surveyed are “not satisfied at all” with current lending options, 82% are unaware of any options available to them in the area
 - Limited access to financing was a cited concern
- ❖ Expressed need for more **training and regulation education** programs in the area
 - 75% only “somewhat satisfied” or unaware of available business training and industry regulations education
- ❖ **Networking** is not currently fostered or utilized in a way that can fulfill its potential impact on the area
 - 91% currently at low level or no interaction with larger business community and market

This survey of African-owned businesses in the Willmar area, and the findings reported here, is meant to be a **catalyst** for organizations and businesses of this area to realize the **potential** of this business community, and work towards efforts that: **expand** and **integrate** business networks and supply chains, develop appropriate **tools** and **services** to **enhance growth**, and offer **effective resources** to a community with the **demand** and **skills** to utilize them for the **betterment and vitality of the entire region**.