

Westside Ministers Coalition, Monroe Foundation Small Business Boot Camp Participants Complete Basic Training



Over 30 nonprofit and small business owners recently gathered together to discuss, learn and "test" strategies for strengthening business and nonprofit development success during a workshop called the Small Business Boot Camp, the third in a series of community development workshops, sponsored by Citibank, and held in economically-struggling communities across Chicago this year.

The workshop was held at the 15th District Chicago Police Department, in cooperation with the CAPS (Chicago Alternative

Participants introduce themselves to their peers and share what they would like to get out of the workshop.

Policing Strategy) Office, Sgt. White. Rev. Kirk I. Gayton, pastor of First New Life Baptist Church in North Lawndale, stated, "Our church is planning to engage in developing affordable housing opportunities in the North Lawndale and Austin communities. Learning about the importance and process of engaging our leaders in a strategic planning process, mapping out the steps to the success of this effort, will be invaluable to us. We are pleased to know Citibank has been supporting this kind of training, and in the community, not downtown".



Participants share the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to their businesses, and the things they will focus on to be successful in 2012.



Valerie F. Leonard

The session was facilitated by Valerie Leonard, a respected community development consultant/trainer, who prepared and instructed from training materials specifically developed for the small business boot camp session in the Austin community. Ms. Leonard provided an overview of the similarities and differences between business plans and strategic plans and shared insights into what bankers and funders would be looking for during their review. Participants also received sample plans, links to other resources and qualified for discounts of 20%-40% on Business Plan Pro software.

Otis C. Monroe, III, CEO of the Monroe Foundation, stated, "Austin is a community that is emerging more and more with new business and community development opportunities, and we partnered with the Westside Ministers Coalition "the Coalition", and Rev. Dr. Lewis Flowers, its' chairman, to mobilize turnout from the nonprofit and small business community in Austin, to be engaged now for their future tomorrow, and hopefully work with Citibank and its' community development banking and lending programs, to further that future".

After the session, participants' meet with Keecha Mccalebb, a Citibank branch leader, to discuss open and lending options, as well as representatives of the Southside Community Federal Credit Union and ACCION, micro-enterprise lenders.