



## FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

### OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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# News Release

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### Frederick County Office of Economic Development Partners to EmPOWER Local Businesses through Mentorship Program

FREDERICK, Md - The Frederick County Office of Economic Development is delighted to announce its collaboration with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Maryland Business Opportunity Center (MBOC) for the 2024 Spring EmPOWER mentorship program. This joint effort is aimed at empowering traditionally underrepresented and small business owners in Frederick County by providing them with support and resources.

"We are incredibly excited about this partnership with the SBDC and MBOC for the EmPOWER mentorship program," said Lara Fritts, Director of the Frederick County Division of Economic Opportunity. "By leveraging our collective resources and expertise, we aim to provide Frederick County's small and underrepresented businesses with the necessary tools and knowledge to thrive in today's competitive business landscape."

Through this partnership, the [EmPOWER Mentorship Program](#) will integrate renowned Pathways to Entrepreneurship Curriculum. Tailored to validate foundational concepts in entrepreneurship and small business management, this curriculum equips participants with the essential skills and knowledge necessary for entrepreneurial success. Mentees will be guided through the business planning process, granted access to various resources, and given the opportunity to earn an Entrepreneurship and Small Business Certification.

"We are thrilled to join forces with the Frederick County Office of Economic Development for the EmPOWER mentorship program," stated Amy Yingling Regional Director of the SBDC. This collaboration represents our shared commitment to fostering inclusive economic development and supporting the growth of small businesses in Frederick County."

Administered by FCOED, the EmPOWER Mentorship Program is designed to cater to underrepresented business owners across different stages of business development. By addressing blind spots, offering fundamental business education, facilitating mentorship with local business leaders, and fostering camaraderie among participants, the program aims to provide a comprehensive support system. There are a total of 15 Frederick County small business owners participating in the six-week mentorship program, representing different industries in Frederick County.

The City of Frederick Department of Economic Development joined forces with FCOED as a Signature Sponsor of the EmPOWER Program, further enhancing services for underrepresented businesses. In addition, the Maryland Business Opportunity Center is the 2024 Spring mentorship sponsor.

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