

Charlotte Business Inclusion  
Advisory Committee

CBIAC

# 2025 Annual Report

Workforce & Economic Development Committee Presentation

May 4, 2026

Presented by Zahn Patin, Chair

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## Who We Are

Charlotte Business Inclusion Advisory Committee — Mission & Membership

### Our Mission

1. Review small business utilization in City contracts
2. Advise City Council on diversity & inclusion in procurement
3. Provide a forum for CBI stakeholders
4. Advise on business community conditions affecting City relations

### 2025 Committee Members

**Zahn Patin** Chair — MMCA  
**Candice N. Gaddy** Vice Chair — ACE LLC  
**Jeremy Johnson** Charlotte Black Chamber  
**Christina Jarrett** NAWBO  
**Kim Lam** Carolinas Asian American Chamber  
**Erian Martinez** Latin American Chamber (LACC)  
**Lakesha Womack** Aspire Community Capital  
**Raghunadha Kotha** City Council Appointed  
**Gary Beal / Jason Deans / Kimberly Gardner** At-Large — Prime Construction  
**Jerome Marez** At-Large — Professional Services  
**Joaquin Soria** At-Large — Charlotte Regional Business Alliance

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## 2025 Year in Review

Strategic Planning & Organizational Development Milestones

### Q1

#### Subcommittees Established

Impact & Accountability  
Outreach & Engagement  
Workforce Development

### Q2

#### Subcommittees Operational

Document library launched  
Working meetings scheduled  
Objectives defined per subcommittee

### Q3

#### Leadership Transition

Zahn Patin transitions  
into role of Chair

### Q4

#### Leadership & Onboarding

Candice Gaddy appointed Vice Chair  
New member onboarding process  
adopted  
2026 Engagement Plan developed

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## 2025 Key Recommendations

Four focus areas requiring City Council action



#### Budget & Outreach

- › Increase CBI budget to ~\$1.3M
- › Implement digital/social strategy
- › Fund joint CBI/CBIAC retreat
- › Reinstate technical assistance programs



#### Program & Certification

- › Streamline HUB to SBE certification transfer
- › Reform SBE certification standards
- › Align with full SBA size standard



#### Operations & Access

- › Maintain current CBI office location
- › Preserve in-person accessibility
- › Protect convenient parking access



#### Committee Structure

- › Define vacancy-filling process
- › Empower committee to advertise seats
- › Strengthen at-large seat representation

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## Budget Recommendation

*Investing in high-impact programming and community outreach*

# \$1.3M

Recommended  
Annual Budget

**Reinstate  
Technical  
Assistance**

CBI Blueprint &  
Contractor Dev. Program

### Recommended Budget Allocation

Digital Outreach Strategy	35%
Technical Assistance Program Mgmt	40%
CBI Outreach & Engagement	23%
CBI/CBIAC Joint Retreat	\$500

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## Structural Recommendation: Committee Seats

*Addressing vacancies to ensure robust stakeholder representation*

### The Challenge

Several committee seats are pre-allocated to named organizations.

When those organizations are non-responsive or inactive, **seats remain vacant with no clear path to fill them.**

This reduces the committee's capacity to represent the full breadth of Charlotte's small business community and weakens the quality of recommendations made to City Council.

### Recommendation

1. Develop a clear, documented process to fill vacant seats
2. Empower the committee to publicly advertise open seats
3. Allow committee to review applications & reference letters
4. Introduce at-large seat flexibility to ensure advocates have a voice
5. Ensure no seat sits vacant without a defined activation timeline

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Our Ask

## Strengthening Charlotte's Small Business Community

- 01 | Approve the \$1.3M CBI budget to sustain and expand high-impact programming
- 02 | Adopt a formal vacancy-filling process to maximize at-large seat representation