

Grass Roots

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THE CITIBANK SPONSORED SMALL BUSINESS BOOTCAMP IN CHICAGO'S AUSTIN COMMUNITY, A SUCCESS!



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Over 30 nonprofit and small business owners gathered together to discuss, learn and "test" strategies for strengthening business and nonprofit development success during a workshop called the **Small Business Bootcamp**, 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 Policing Strategy) Office, Sgt. White and facilitated by community development consultant, Valerie Leonard.

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".

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.

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 non-profit and small business community in Austin, to be engaged now for their future tomorrow, and hopefully work with Citibank and its' commu-

nity development banking and lending programs, to further that future".

After the session, participants' met with Keecha McCalabb, 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.

Information about the next Small Business Bootcamp may be obtained by eMailing your name, name of business, phone, and eMail address to: omonroe@themonroefoundation.org.

