our mission

Business Outreach Center Network’s mission is to improve the economic prospects of traditionally underserved groups, with a focus on low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs and their communities, and thereby create genuinely brighter futures.

At the heart of our mission is the belief that whatever their differences, people and communities share a common goal: to achieve economic stability and growth. Working in partnership with culturally diverse individuals and organizations in support of this shared goal is the hallmark of BOC.

what’s your next step?
our services

BOC Network helps with all aspects of business including business plan development, training, financial management assistance, pricing strategies, business regulations and access to financing whether it is from micro-lenders or mainstream sources of capital. Local BOCs help low-income entrepreneurs build credit and coordinate entrepreneurial networking groups in areas such as industrial, e-commerce and fashion.

special projects

BOC Bronx/ BXL Business Incubator
Business American-Style Workshops
Child Care Business Development Project
CWE Jobs to Build On
MBDA Manhattan Business Center
Microenterprise Development Services
NYCEDC Best for NYC
NYC Industrial Business Solutions
NYC SBS Childcare Business Pathways
NYC SBS Immigrant Business Initiative
NYC SBS WE NYC WE Master Money: Funding
NYS Entrepreneurial Assistance Program
OCS Community Economic Development Programs
ORR Microenterprise Development Program
ORR Refugee Individual Development Account Program
SBA-sponsored Women’s Business Center
Technology Business Growth Initiative
Community Development Financial Institution
ESDC Small Business Revolving Loan Fund
Goldman Sachs 10KSB / The Surdna Foundation Mobilization Loan Fund
NYC EDC Capital Access Revolving Loan Guarantee Program
NYC EDC Kick Start Loan Program
NYC EDC Construct NYC Program for Construction Contactors
NYC SBS Up Front Capital Loan Program
SBA Microloan Program/ Community Advantage Loan Program
BOC is a network of collaborating non-profits that focuses on building community economic capacity among disadvantaged groups such as immigrants, women, minorities, and other people with limited economic capacity and connection. BOC integrates these aspiring and existing entrepreneurs and small business owners into the greater economic mainstream by building capacity, credit, and business opportunity within their communities and beyond. BOC adds substantial value to our neighborhoods and communities by supporting business growth and development, job creation, and the overall economic growth and well-being of the neighborhoods it serves. New economic activity from all segments of our community must be nurtured, creating a vibrant community that benefits all.

Community organizations such as BOC are vital and require your continued support. The Network’s collaborative approach among its member community-based organizations throughout NYC and beyond stimulates higher productivity, access to credit, development of new and creative ideas and approaches, and is recognized as an effective model for interaction among economic development organizations everywhere.

Cities in general, and New York City in particular, are about new business development, enhanced business activity, and job creation. Cities provide the raw materials: creative inspiration, motivation and opportunity. Entrepreneurs and business owners employ people. The BOC Network provides the loans, linkages and services to make a coordinated and collaborative approach to help entrepreneurs be successful and grow small businesses. We add energy and direction by providing insight, capacity, connections, funding, information, business-to-business links, mentoring, a business plan, and access to public economic development and other public and private businesses resources.

Sincerely,

Leslie Winter
BOC Network Board Chair
Barbara Armand is the CEO of Armand Corporation, a construction and project management firm with a multi-state focus. Since 2010, the business has seen significant growth in the New York City market and has performed on multiple Super Storm Sandy recovery and resiliency projects. Armand Corporation continues to add to their portfolio, recently winning the opportunity to provide construction management services under NYC Economic Development Corporation.

Ms. Armand started her career in construction as a field engineer with Bechtel, later working as a consultant for the construction and operation of nuclear power plants. In 1991 Armand Corporation was formed. As the company evolved, Ms. Armand sought to expand from its New Jersey base. With this resolve, Ms. Armand commuted everyday for years from southern New Jersey to New York City in order to make the necessary business connections leading to contracts.

In 2011, Armand Corporation began work under contract with the New York City Housing Authority at sites in the Bronx and Harlem. As this growth required working capital, Ms. Armand pursued contract-based financing with BOC Capital Corp. According to Barbara, “BOC came in like a white knight,” immediately working with her to deliver $150,000 in financing and ensuring Ms. Armand had the tools needed to develop solid financial projections for future projects. Soon, Armand Corporation acquired a reputation as a nimble company providing high quality professional services.

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, Armand Corporation delivered impactful recovery services under the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery, supervising and facilitating residential home recovery in upstate NY and Long Island for thousands of families. With great pride in these accomplishments, Ms. Armand intends to utilize this expertise to make a meaningful impact in resiliency projects both locally and beyond.

Ms. Armand has grown her professional staff at her offices in New York City, Long Island and New Jersey. Her business has an over 85% repeat customer rate and successfully competes against larger mainstream construction management firms. She sees herself as an underdog with unlimited potential, and pursues her goals with perseverance, grit, and determination.
Zahra Amanpour is the founder of Indiegrove located in Jersey City, a co-working venture that supports small businesses and professionals. Before launching Indiegrove, Ms. Amanpour worked in economic development for ten years and played a leadership role in supporting entrepreneurs at New York City Small Business Services. Having worked with similar ventures in New York, she saw the amazing potential of the co-working business model to foster the growth of entrepreneurship in the community. Ms. Amanpour identified a market for her co-working venture in New Jersey and developed a comprehensive business plan.

Ms. Amanpour was inspired to dedicate herself fulltime to the venture with a clear vision of the opportunity within reach. As a startup in a new industry, Ms. Amanpour looked to alternative financing sources to launch Indiegrove. Through an introduction from BOC, she began a relationship with Greater Newark Enterprises Corporation (GNEC), a Community Development Financial Institution and member of BOC Network. GNEC provided start-up financing that, together with her investment, enabled Ms. Amanpour to begin renovations of a 6,000 square foot space in a prime Jersey City location. In 2013 Indiegrove, “a space to work and grow,” was born.

Ms. Amanpour worked seven days a week to build a brand for a workspace conducive to collaboration, connection and creativity. Today, Ms. Amanpour is proud that she has brought together diverse businesses, from hardware tech startups to massage therapists who work together passionately in a bright, professional and comfortable environment.

Indiegrove has enjoyed a significant rate of growth. Because of demand, Ms. Amanpour expanded Indiegrove to an additional 4,000 square feet of space. Her commitment to her vision enabled Ms. Amanpour to foster positive momentum, creativity and entrepreneurship in her community. With this vision she plans to further expand Indiegrove and bring the enterprise to additional communities and entrepreneurs.
Kelly and Laura Moffat own Kirrin Finch, a menswear-inspired clothing line for women located in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Business ideas are not usually the topic of conversation during a honeymoon, but for Kelly and Laura Moffat this was an ideal time for inspiration. While traveling in Scotland Kelly and Laura had the realization that there were not enough clothing options for non-conforming individuals and decided to launch Kirrin Finch. The name Kirrin Finch is derived from George Kirrin of “The Famous Five” series and Scout Finch from “To Kill a Mockingbird,” both iconic tomboys. Although, the partners were new to the fashion industry that didn’t deter them. They combined their experience in research and marketing, and began to prepare themselves.

The partners got to work on a business plan while developing needed skills at the Fashion Institute of Technology. BOC helped with the planning process and connected them to the Brooklyn Fashion+Design Accelerator to access industry-specific mentorship. The Accelerator, which usually considers businesses that are 2-3 years old, accepted Kirrin Finch as a new start-up. Laura and Kelly took advantage of every resource available, from the sample room to the invaluable manufacturing experience of fellow entrepreneurs.

As the new owners were rolling out their product designs, Kelly and Laura Moffat also focused on pre-launch marketing and raising capital. Kirrin Finch ran a 30-day Kickstarter campaign and after tireless outreach, the partners successfully raised $36,000 in 20 days, exceeding the $30,000 goal. During the campaign, Kirrin Finch spotlighted campaign backers as “Dapper Scouts,” sharing compelling stories about individual identity, mission and personal fashion.

Kelly and Laura created Kirrin Finch with a mission to give back to the LGBTQ community and empower women. Their fashions are modeled by regular people so that each customer can see themselves in the product. Their fabrics are sustainably sourced and their clothing lines are manufactured locally in New York City. Recently, Kirrin Finch added a bowtie line using upcycled fabric from their shirts.

Above all, Kelly and Laura Moffat understand the importance of starting a conversation about identity which is central to their product. The business’ unique value proposition is expressed in the way Kirrin Finch engages with customers’ personal stories alongside the fashion. With this connection, their customers are empowered in their fashion.
For Kalvin Lee, community is essential. Born and raised in Manhattan Chinatown, he has joined his wife, Dr. Jenny Zhu, to establish Manhattan Bridge Orthodontics, across the street from the building where he grew up.

Mr. Lee received his MBA from Baruch College in 2008 at a time when finance jobs were scarce. His wife, Dr. Zhu finished her Orthodontics specialization from Columbia University at the same time. The timing was perfect for the two to start their own business. Mr. Lee reached out to CMP and its Business Outreach Center, and gained connections that led to financing through a bank loan.

Manhattan Bridge Orthodontics opened its doors in December 2008. Today, Manhattan Bridge Orthodontics employs fourteen and is one of the top three Invisalign offices in Manhattan. Mr. Lee credits this success to their team. With little to no staff turnover, Mr. Lee and Dr. Zhu created an office that is a testament to community. “We have the best doctor with the best staff.”

Mr. Lee and Dr. Zhu seek to continually optimize their services and provide the best care to their patients. Theirs was one of the first practices to embrace 3D technology to create Invisalign molds for their patients. Patients benefit from the shorter visits.

Two thousand young patients have come through the doors, often feeling awkward and nervous about braces. They soon develop a close connection with Dr. Zhu and the team. With its growth and success, the practice is rapidly running out of space and looking to expand.

Manhattan Bridge Orthodontics also gives back to the community by sponsoring local youth and adult basketball leagues. For Mr. Lee and Dr. Zhu, the definition of team extends beyond their business to the community.
The word “driven” almost falls short of describing Haoua Seynou, owner of a Haoua’s Africa Hair Braiding, a microenterprise located in Hempstead, Long Island, a long commute from her home in the Bronx. Within 3 years of her arrival in the United States, Ms. Seynou has become an independent entrepreneur with a vision for growth.

Ms. Seynou, a single mother with one child, came to New York from the West African nation of Burkina Faso. Within three days of arriving in the United States, Ms. Seynou found her first job where she developed her hair braiding craft. Ms. Seynou worked with an Angolan hair braider in Jamaica, Queens, who offered to train her while Ms. Seynou helped in the shop. By the end of three months and tireless practice, Ms. Seynou had developed her craft and could “braid a whole head.” She soon developed a quality reputation in the community.

After a year passed, Ms. Seynou surveyed her own achievements and decided it was time to become an independent entrepreneur. In 2014 Haoua’s Africa Hair Braiding was born. She started the microenterprise by renting one chair in a salon on Main Street in Hempstead and began developing her clientele. In the fall of 2015, Ms. Seynou learned of BOC’s refugee matched savings program and immediately signed up. She saved the required amount and participated in a series of financial education classes. The program matched her savings and with this money Ms. Seynou was able to grow her business at a second salon. “Adding the two chairs made me want to work even more,” Ms. Seynou says. With this motivation, Ms. Seynou used the salon as her home base for future growth.

Today, Ms. Seynou’s business has four chairs which in turn support additional hair braiders in her community, women whom she treats like family. Riding on this success, Ms. Seynou’s next goal is to have her own salon.

Ms. Seynou’s story is a story of perseverance; “I am proud because I put in a lot of effort to achieve my goal.”
With seventy-three different plumbing licenses across Long Island and NYC, it’s safe to say Carlos Jaramillo knows about plumbing. But navigating government contracts was a whole new world. Mr. Jaramillo is the owner of Metrocity Group, Inc., a plumbing contractor, founded in Queens and now located in Long Island.

Mr. Jaramillo started learning the art of plumbing from a neighbor at the age of fourteen. After 16 years as a partner in that neighbor’s company, Mr. Jaramillo knew it was time to branch out and start his own business.

Mr. Jaramillo launched Metrocity Group with the intention to reach beyond a residential clientele, and to compete for small government contracts. He applied for and received his Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification in April 2014. Just hours after Metrocity Group was certified as a DBE, a major plumbing contractor contacted Mr. Jaramillo. The call turned into a $1.8 million subcontract working on the MTA 2nd Avenue Subway line.

Excited and overwhelmed by the opportunity, Mr. Jaramillo reached out to BOC for help and began his relationship with two BOC professionals, one in construction management and one in industrial business development. BOC helped Mr. Jaramillo understand certified payroll, insurance requirements and the logistics of handling a large contract. He joined NYCEDC Money Matters and Blue Print for Success training programs operated by BOC in order to build his capacity to handle large contracts. With this support and a $150,000 BOC Capital contract-based loan, Metrocity Group was set up for success.

Soon an unforeseen opportunity opened up. When the prime contractor defaulted, and the bonding company stepped in, Mr. Jaramillo was offered the remaining portion of the multi million dollar contract. His team grew from 4 workers onsite to 30 in a matter of months. Mr. Jaramillo reports that work on the 2nd Avenue Subway 96th Street Station is ahead of schedule with few complications. Metrocity is building a stellar reputation and has a growing list of projects and offers, including work on the Whitestone Bridge.

Mr. Jaramillo is proud of his growth and learning, and has built a highly effective team. “I feel like we can do almost any project in New York.”
Bob Chory and Tom Siegenthaler have a big vision for Valente Yeast, a business founded in 1909 in Little Italy and now located in Maspeth, Queens. For the partners, Valente Yeast is more than a bakery supplies distributor, it is a resource for its customers, offering industry expertise and business guidance.

“If you stay focused on your customer’s needs, you will grow as a business.” This motto has guided the partners’ decision-making. They have transformed the business with state-of-the-art equipment and benefited from NYC’s industrial business resources. Recently, Valente invested in technology to streamline internal processes, monitor freezer temperatures and track merchandise. Valente voluntarily undergoes third party health and safety inspections and consistently surpasses industry standards. According to Mr. Chory, “Food safety is our priority and it should be our client’s as well.”

Valente also consistently invests in its people and the community. BOC’s Industrial Business services connected Valente Yeast to job training programs leading to workforce improvement and the promotion of two employees. Valente Yeast supports its 25 employees with training, a retirement plan and good wages. Valente also regularly donates to City Harvest. In a single month, Valente donated 9,878 pounds of food to community food programs.

In 2016, Valente Yeast was selected as a Best for NYC Honoree, for their environmental and community business practices. The two owners also participated in BOC’s Best for NYC Business Peer Exchange, generously offering advice, guidance and encouragement to their peers.

In the six years since Mr. Chory and Mr. Siegenthaler assumed leadership, they increased sales by 40%, doubled the profit and acquired another company. The business is on track for continued growth under the leadership of the owners.
Jaspal Paul Bagha is an immigrant entrepreneur with an eye for opportunity. After years working in food service, Mr. Bagha felt it was time to build his own business.

Mr. Bagha looked for business opportunities in his home borough of Staten Island. In 1998 he found the perfect challenge, a family-owned bagel shop with declining sales, in a prime location near schools and a hospital. He knew he had what it would take to make the shop a success.

Hillside Gourmet opened in 1998 and quickly became known for its great food and service. Mr. Bagha worked seven days a week, cooking and taking care of clients on his own. Even as his staff grew, he remained the kind of business owner always ready to fill in when needed.

Although his direct client sales were robust, Mr. Bagha decided to expand into catering. Word of mouth quickly spread to the hospital and schools in the area. Soon, Mr. Bagha saw an opportunity to further grow his business by expanding catering services to all five boroughs of New York City and to seek out city contracts.

He approached Staten Island Business Outreach Center for help with Minority-Owned Business Enterprise certification and guidance with procurement. Hillside Gourmet became a go-to caterer for events with the Department of Youth and Community Development, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the Office of Information Technology and Telecommunications, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services as well as the the Mayor’s Office. His average catering order size exploded from 500 to 1500 people; and his business grew to 8 employees.

At the end of the day, Hillside Gourmet is a neighborhood business. Patrons grew up together, stop by everyday and have families in the area. Mr. Bagha credits his success simply to good service and good food.
These are the words of twenty-two-year-old Lisbeth Gonzalez Garcia who owns a successful daycare in Washington Heights and is pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education. That’s a powerful truth for someone who arrived to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic just four years ago.

When Ms. Gonzalez Garcia joined her mother in NYC in 2013, she decided not to let her youth or language become a barrier to pursuing her dreams. While gaining experience by working in community daycares, she began pursuing a degree from Borough of Manhattan Community College.

Ms. Gonzalez Garcia joined the Childcare Means Business Course at Washington Heights Inwood Development Corporation, determined to open her own home-based daycare. She tackled the steps involved in finding a suitable apartment and preparing for the business, while maintaining a fulltime job, and pursuing her degree.

Liz First Steps opened on August 30, 2015. For two months, Ms. Gonzalez Garcia organized both herself and her boyfriend to reach out to the community. They spent long days handing out flyers, talking to neighbors and visiting schools. She was determined to get the venture off the ground successfully.

In November 2015 she enrolled the first child, followed by two new enrollments in December and five more soon after. The registered home-based daycare reached capacity in January 2016 and has had a waiting list ever since. Parents in the neighborhood appreciate the beautiful well-lit space adapted for early childhood education, and recognize Ms. Gonzalez Garcia’s commitment and level of professionalism. The business has also impressed a local child care network, which now sends families to enroll their children.

With 10 children on her waiting list, and one employee, Ms. Gonzalez Garcia has plans to apply for a license to expand enrollment capacity. She has big plans for the future and is always searching for opportunities to educate herself. She is pursuing her Child Development Associate certificate alongside her degree and has a longterm vision for a commercial child care center. “It’s a lot of work but it’s possible.”
As a young adult in Ecuador, Tania Duchi intended to pursue a career working with children. As a new immigrant in New York City, she stayed focused on her passion. She began working with foster children at the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services, developing essential skills and experience. Ms. Duchi remembers telling herself, “My dream will not end here,” and after years of work with foster children, she decided to establish a home-based daycare in Bushwick, Brooklyn.

With her husband’s support, Ms. Duchi made modifications to their home, and opened Tania’s Dream of Love Daycare in February 2013. The first month she opened she enrolled two children and very soon after she had a waiting list. She believes the reason why parents seek her out is because they appreciate the quality of the care and the warmth she provides. Preschoolers at her daycare are constantly engaged in educational activities, while being enveloped in a caring environment. Parents hear regularly about the progress of their child’s development.

Ms. Duchi not only nurtures young children but also seeks out professional development opportunities for her staff and herself.

In 2015, Ms. Duchi participated in the Child Care Means Business course at Queens BOC where she refined her management capacity, “You need to know about childcare but you also need to know how to run a business.” Ms. Duchi participates in QUALITYstarsNY classes that help her reach a higher level of accreditation. She also supported her two assistants earn their Child Development Associate certification. In 2016, Ms. Duchi participated in BOC’s Best for NYC Business Peer Exchange and was selected as a Best for NYC Honoree in both Best for Worker and Community categories.

Recently, Ms. Duchi collaborated in the creation of a coalition of local home based child care providers to share resources and advocate for their industry. Ms. Duchi is dedicated to the families and children in her community, and to other women like herself who provide vital child care services.
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