AFRICAN AMERICAN BUSINESS LEADERS COUNCIL

Empower Black Series Events Standard

A consistent operating standard for high-impact Empower Black experiences.

Gather Our Community. Grow Our Economy.

PURPOSE

What the Standard Protects

One framework. Three outcomes.

ALIGNMENT

Every event advances Black business and economic empowerment.

CONSISTENCY

Every event delivers a recognizable, high-quality Empower Black experience.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Every event defines outcomes and captures meaningful impact.

The standard allows flexibility in format without diluting the Empower Black purpose.

NORTH STAR

The Empower Black Event Promise

CONNECT

Relationships & mentorship

LEARN

Business & workforce skills

SUPPORT

Black-owned business

ACCESS

Business & career pathways

ELEVATE

Visibility

CIRCULATE

Local reinvestment

Every event should deliver multiple dimensions of this promise—not simply attendance.

When an Event Earns the Empower Black Name

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Clear business/economic purpose
- ✓ Meaningful benefit to Black businesses or professionals
- ✓ Intentional connection, education, commerce, or access
- ✓ Black-owned business engagement when feasible
- ✓ Defined outcomes and clear attendee action

4-OF-6 QUALITY TEST

- Connect
- Educate
- Create Access
- Generate Impact
- Elevate
- Inspire Action

Approval threshold: strongly satisfy at least 4 of 6.

Six Signature Event Categories

CONNECT	Networking and mentorship	**LEARN**	Business growth and career skills
CAPITAL	Funding and generational wealth	**ACCESS**	Procurement and workforce access
MARKETPLACE	Commerce and consumer engagement	**VOICES**	Storytelling and thought leadership

Recommended annual cadence: 4–6 signature experiences.

Black Businesses Building Black Businesses

A structured network where established Black entrepreneurs support startups and growing businesses.

MATCH	Match experienced business owners with startups and growing businesses.
ADVISE	Establish peer-to-peer business advisory circles.
BUILD LEGACY	Facilitate succession planning and generational wealth education.
OPEN DOORS	Encourage established businesses to mentor, subcontract with, and refer opportunities to emerging businesses.

Business Ownership & Workforce Opportunity

Black-owned businesses help develop the next generation of skilled workers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders.

PARTNER	Work with schools, colleges, workforce boards, and career training providers.
CREATE ACCESS	Offer internships, apprenticeships, job-shadowing, and work-based learning.
CONNECT PEOPLE	Connect youth, veterans, and people facing employment barriers to career pathways.
BUILD SKILLS	Promote skilled trades, certifications, entrepreneurship, and high-priority occupations.

Sustainable Economic & Social Impact

Build an ecosystem that reflects the communities it serves and creates pathways to economic independence.

INVEST LOCALLY	Encourage local hiring and neighborhood reinvestment.
EDUCATE	Support entrepreneurship education for young adults.
WELCOME BACK	Partner to support people returning from incarceration and military service.
REMOVE BARRIERS	Expand opportunities that address economic exclusion and barriers to employment.
ELEVATE LEADERS	Spotlight successful Black entrepreneurs as mentors, employers, and visible community leaders.

Planning & Delivery Timeline

YEAR 1 CADENCE

One signature Empower Black event every two months

AUG	OCT	DEC	FEB	APR	JUN
Event 1	**Event 2**	**Event 3**	**Event 4**	**Event 5**	**Event 6**
Black Business Month	Gems & Joe	Year-end activation	Signature experience	Signature experience	Signature experience
COMPLETED	COMPLETED	NEXT			

OPERATING RHYTHM

Each event enters active planning immediately after the prior event, creating an approximately 8-week planning and delivery cycle.

Five Required Program Components

01	**WELCOME**	Set purpose and introduce AABLC.
02	**SPOTLIGHT**	Spotlight Black entrepreneurs as mentors, employers, and leaders.
03	**EXPERIENCE**	Deliver the event’s core value.
04	**CONNECTION**	Connect mentors, peers, and workforce partners.
05	**ACTION**	Mentor • Hire • Refer • Subcontract • Invest

Venue, Vendor & Procurement Standard

VENDOR PROCUREMENT PRIORITY

1. **Black-owned businesses**
2. Chamber-member businesses
3. Community-based businesses and organizations
4. Mission-aligned corporate or institutional partners

BLACK-OWNED SUPPLIER OPPORTUNITIES

- Catering
- Photography & videography
- Entertainment
- Graphic design & printing
- Décor & event production
- Speakers & facilitators
- Vendors & professional services
- Gifts & promotional products

Prioritize Black-owned suppliers and encourage mentoring, subcontracting, referrals, and local hiring.

VISIBILITY

Brand & Marketing Standard

NAMING

EMPOWER BLACK: [EVENT / THEME]

Presented by the African American Business Leaders Council

CAMPAIGN ESSENTIALS

- Event listing + registration
- Email + social launch
- Business, mentor & employer spotlights
- Partner promotion + reminders
- Event-day capture
- Post-event impact recap

Use authentic Lehigh Valley Black business and community imagery whenever possible.

Measure What the Series Is Designed to Change

PARTICIPATION	Attendance • first-time/returning attendees • businesses represented
ECONOMIC VALUE	Supplier spend • sales • referrals • subcontracts • capital connections
ENGAGEMENT	Mentor matches • advisory circles • internships • workforce referrals
EXPERIENCE	Value • skills gained • local hires • reinvestment • barriers addressed
FOLLOW-THROUGH	Within 5 business days: thank-yous, survey, social recap, business tagging, preliminary metrics. Within 2 weeks: internal lessons + impact recap.

People do more than attend.

They connect. Mentor. Learn. Hire. Refer. Reinvest. Create opportunity.

GATHER OUR COMMUNITY. • GROW OUR ECONOMY. • EMPOWER BLACK.