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# August is National Black Business Month, local businesses share impact

By [Marz Anderson](#)

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LANSING, Mich. (WILX) - "Highlighting the people who have really bootstrapped and really been able to do something, it makes it so that other people want to try and that we aren't just accepting what's offered to us. We go, and we get what we deserve," said Ali Bennet, a Black business owner in Lansing who is looking to empower others through networking and collaboration.

Black-owned businesses increase more than 7% annually. National Black Business Month acknowledges not only the economic contributions of Black-owned businesses but also the social and cultural impact of these businesses.

[According to the Department for Small and Local Business Development](#), about 3% of U.S. businesses are Black or African American-owned—a small number, about 3 million businesses, generating over \$130 million in total sales. Black businesses are continuing to open, offering several goods and services to the communities where they hope to thrive.

Domonika Tipton owner of [Uplift and Inspire Counseling and Consulting](#) in Lansing says representation motivated her to start her business.



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"There is definitely a disparity when it comes to what we receive as sometimes African Americans in the mental world. As an African American person that has to also be involved personally within the healthcare system, I wanted to create something that I didn't see," said Tipton.

While Uplift and Inspire has been open for four years and welcomes everyone, Bloomberg reports eight out of ten Black-owned businesses fail within the first 18 months. Tipton says this could be for several reasons.

"Funding wise for African Americans, sometimes that isn't the greatest, in part because we may not be as knowledgeable about the business side of things going into it. So, I've definitely had trial and error," said Tipton.

Tipton received funding from the [Lansing Economic Area Partnership](#) (LEAP), which she says had a great impact on her business. Community awareness and networking can also lead to the success of a business, says Bennet, who owns [Grassroots Giving](#), a business directory connecting Black business owners to resources and community support.

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"We can all come together and actively support one another, share our business knowledge, so that people can start building that generational wealth, and when one person makes it, it affects the whole community," said Bennet.

Grassroots Giving launched in February, and Bennet hopes to see her business grow. Her advice for those wanting to start a business is to start small.

"Talk to other business owners, get some mentorship, and if you really like, start small and build your way up," said Bennet.

Small business owners can take advantage of resources in the Lansing area, including the [Small Business Association of Michigan](#), the [Michigan Small Business Development Center](#) and the Lansing Economic Area Partnership.

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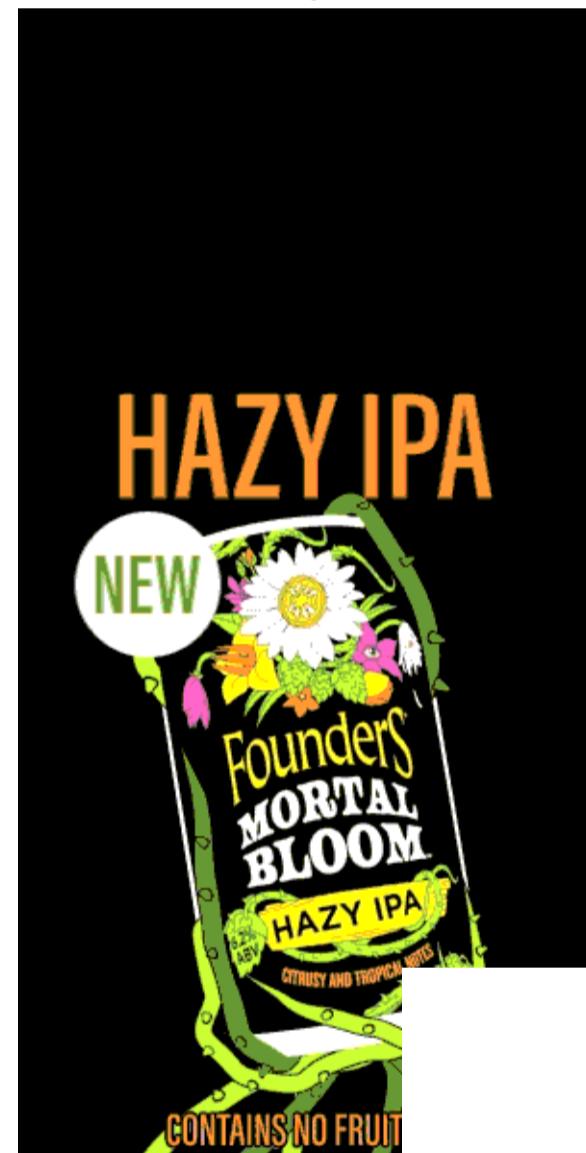
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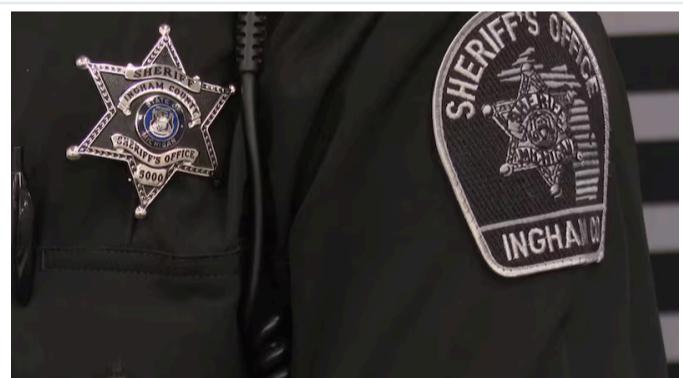
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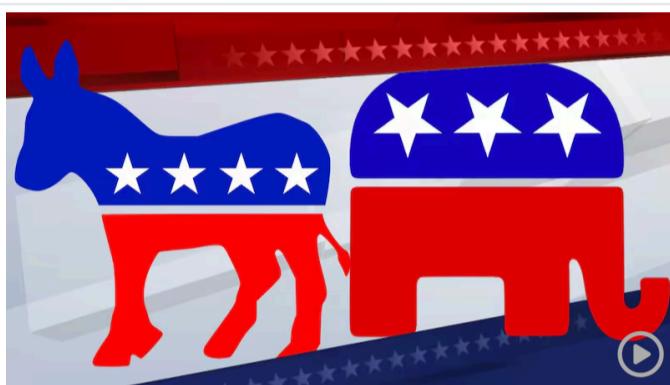
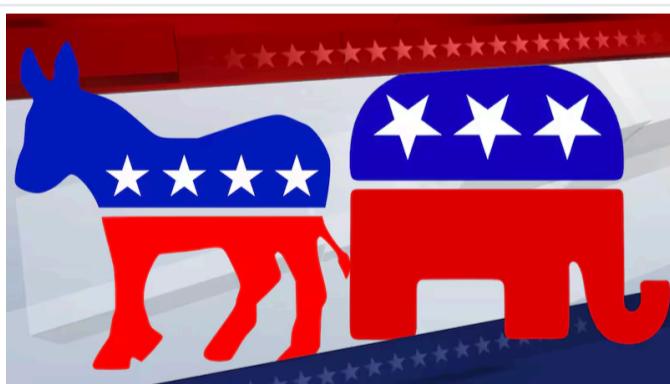


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