MINORITY ENTERPRISE
DEVELOPMENT CORP.
PEOPLE | PARTNERSHIPS | PROSPERITY
MEDC
RISE 2026
CONFERENCE
Event Program
OCTOBER 29 - 30, 2026
HILTON TAMPA
AIRPORT WESTSHORE
Tampa, FL

Welcome to the MEDC RISE 2026 Conference

Resilient . Innovative . Strategic . Empowered .

Welcome to the **MEDC RISE 2026 Conference**, a gathering designed to connect business leaders, public agencies, corporate partners, and entrepreneurs around practical opportunities for growth.

Across two days, **RISE** brings together recognition, inspiration, procurement conversations, supplier connections, and business-to-business relationship building. Our goal is to help businesses meet decision-makers, understand pathways to contracting, and build partnerships that support a stronger Tampa Bay economy.

For more information, visit https://www.flmedc.org/

DAY 1 . THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

MEDC ANNUAL RECOGNITION AWARDS & KEYNOTE

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

An evening celebrating achievement, leadership, and the businesses and partners helping build a more resilient and inclusive regional economy.

Order of the Evening

- **Welcome** Larry Davis, MEDC Chair
- **Purpose:** Johnathan Graham, President, HORUS Construction
- **Awardees:**
  - Gabriel Bonserio
  - Joseph Hall
  - Courtney Jackson
  - Gilene Musah
  - Earlishia Oates
  - Scott Peper
  - Tony Selvaggio
- **Keynote Speaker** Shaquem Griffin
- **Fireside Chat Moderated** Eric Graham
- **Special Recognition of Avril Stinson**
- **Closing Remarks** Siena Dean

DAY 2 . FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

RISE 2026 CONFERENCE

8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM	**Sponsors & Partner Expo** Meet public agencies, corporations and business partners.
8:30 AM – 9:45 AM	**CEOs Mastermind Breakfast** (Moderator) Diane Cortes, Robert James and Ivelise Rivera

OPPORTUNITY ZONES / PROCUREMENT (MORNING SESSIONS)

TIME	ZONE 1	ZONE 2
10:00 AM	Tampa Airport	Polk County
10:30 AM	HART	PNC Bank
11:00 AM	Tampa General Hospital	RYAN Companies
11:30 AM	Silent Partner	Hillsborough County Public Schools

MIDDAY PROGRAM *See timing note below*

12:00 PM – 1:15 PM * **Built to Rise: Resilience in Supply Chain Ecosystems** Ana Maria Lowery & Susan Schwamm	12:15 PM – 1:15 PM * **Luncheon** Monica Cupid

OPPORTUNITY ZONES / PROCUREMENT (AFTERNOON SESSIONS)

TIME	ZONE 1	ZONE 2
1:30 PM	Hillsborough County Procurement	First Citizens Bank
2:00 PM	The Lane Construction Corporation	Skanska USA

Featured Speakers

Leadership across business, technology, workforce development, and community impact.

SHAQUEM GRIFFIN

Shaquem Griffin . Keynote Speaker . October 29

Former NFL Linebacker • Motivational Speaker • Author • Entrepreneur

Shaquem Griffin is a former NFL linebacker whose story of perseverance and resilience has inspired audiences worldwide. After playing with the Seattle Seahawks and Miami Dolphins, he built a career as a motivational speaker and entrepreneur. He is an author of *Inseparable*, co-founder of Consumer Launch Pad and Y.O.U. Adapt, and creator of The Locker Room Playbook curriculum. His keynote, "Pain to Purpose," focuses on turning adversity into motivation and action.

BOB JAMES

Robert "Bob" James . CEOs Mastermind Breakfast . October 30

Founder & CEO, RJ Innovation Inc. • Transportation technology and AI

Bob James leads RJ Innovation Inc., a Tampa Bay deep-tech company developing URGN™, an ultra-wideband micropositioning platform designed to provide precise location where GPS falls short. His career includes senior engineering and leadership roles at HNTB, First Transit, and NJ Transit. At NJ Transit, his Innovation Train program earned IDC's Best in Future of Digital Innovation award and approximately $22 million in grants. He also teaches AI for Business and AI for Transportation.

IVELISSE RIVERA

Ivelisse Rivera . CEOs Mastermind Breakfast . October 30

Founder & President/CEO, Florida Aerospace Training Center

Ivelisse Rivera founded Florida Aerospace Training Center to strengthen the aviation workforce through practical education and accessible career pathways. The center provides hands-on avionics training, including electrical fundamentals, aircraft wiring, and troubleshooting, while preparing students for the FCC General Radiotelephone Operator License examinations. Her youth outreach includes summer camps, STEM workshops, Girls Achieving Leadership in Aviation, and community and scholarship initiatives.

Featured Speakers — Continued

MONICA CUPID, MBA

Monica Cupid, MBA . Luncheon Speaker . October 30

President & CEO, Florida Business Development Council

Monica Cupid is a nonprofit executive and development professional with more than two decades of experience in organizational leadership, grant development, and community impact. As President & CEO of the Florida Business Development Council, she brings experience in operational strategy, grant funding, contract monitoring, donor cultivation, program evaluation, and organizational performance. She previously served as Vice President of Operations and as an adjunct instructor at Broward College.

ANA MARIA LOWRY, JD

Ana Maria Lowry, JD . Luncheon Speaker . October 30

President & CEO, A&P International, Inc.

Ana Maria Quintero Lowry is the President and CEO of A & P International, Inc., a business development firm that unites people to thrive. A leading expert in supply chain resilience, coaching, and training with over 40 years of experience, her and her team provide expert guidance on supplier procurement programs, Mentor/Protégé initiatives, and business development that empower small, medium businesses to fast-track project opportunities. Author of *Cross-Cultural*, *A New Thirst for Diversity Engagement* and co-author of *The Maturity Stages of a Trusted, Diverse Ecosystem*. She holds a Juris Doctorate and Master's in International Trade from Pontifical Javeriana University in Bogotá, Colombia.

SUSAN SCHRAMM

Susan Schramm . Luncheon Speaker . October 30

Founder, Go to Market Impact • Author

Susan Schramm founded Go to Market Impact to help CEOs and boards accelerate high-stakes strategies and manage the people-related risks that derail results. A former IBM, Siemens, and Nokia executive, she has served on startup, nonprofit, and faith-based boards. She co-authored *The Maturity Stages of a Trusted Diverse Ecosystem* and authored *Fast Track Your Big Idea!*, offering practical tools to navigate risk, inspire action, and turn bold visions into measurable impact. Susan is fueled by faith, family, and a bottomless cup of coffee.

Letter from Mayor Castor

CITY OF TAMPA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Jane Castor, Mayor

Greetings,

It is a pleasure to welcome members and guests to the Minority Enterprise Development Corporation's **MEDC 2026 RISE Conference** on October 29-30, 2026, in Tampa, Florida, and held at the Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore Hotel. This year's conference theme, ***RISE – Resilient. Innovative. Strategic. Empowered.*** reflects the essential elements of a growing, sustainable, and successful business.

Formerly known as Minority Enterprise Development Week (M.E.D. Week), established in 1992, Minority Enterprise Development Corporation (MEDC) is a collaborative partnership of public, private, and nonprofit organizations dedicated to advancing minority business leaders. The organization's mission is to enhance and support growth opportunities to ensure success for minority-owned businesses across Tampa Bay.

The MEDC RISE Conference celebrates local, small, and diverse businesses and support organizations that contribute to the economic vitality of the Tampa Bay region. The two-day event brings together CEOs. executives, policymakers, and procurement professionals for valuable engagement, an awards reception, guest speakers, meetings, exhibitor expo, workshops, and more.

Again, welcome. Best wishes for a productive and inspiring time.

Sincerely,

Jane Castor

Jane Castor

MEDC Board of Directors

Executive Board

- **Board Chairman** Larry Davis, *Community Business Solutions*
- **Vice Chair** Kai Earle-Marion, *C&S Companies*
- **Treasurer** Lynette Darrell, *TECO*
- **Vice Treasurer** Eric Graham, *ISAMO Group*
- **Secretary** Diane Cortes, *Acumen Strategist*

Directors

- Felix Bratslavsky, *Tampa General Hospital*
- Dana Holmes-Jenkins, *D & K Systems Consulting*
- Theresa Kempa, *Hillsborough County Economic Development*
- Darryl McCall, *JPMorgan Chase & Co.*
- Rick Cabigas, *Hawk Arrow LLC*
- Charles Jackson, *Mijan Construction*
- Bertha Mitchell, *City of Tampa*
- Kourey Hendryx-Bell, *City of St. Petersburg*

Executive Director

- Navin K. Veerapa

Sponsors

Thank you for investing in opportunity.

MEDC extends its appreciation to the sponsors, corporate partners, public agencies, and community organizations supporting RISE 2026.

C&S COMPANIES

CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

HART

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LANE CONSTRUCTION

MOFFITT CANCER CENTER

PNC BANK

RYAN COMPANIES

SUNCOAST CREDIT UNION

TAMPA ELECTRIC

VERSATILE TILE & MARBLE

WELLS FARGO BANK

MEDC 2026 RISE Conference Badge

Issued by USF Office of Corporate Training and Professional Education.

The MEDC 2026 Business Conference is a key event for minority entrepreneurs, support organizations, sponsors and procurement professionals. It aims to promote innovation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing across industries. The agenda topics include accessing vital financial resources, developing partnerships, identifying contracting opportunities, and supplier diversity program development.

Earning Criteria

- Earners of this badge have attended three of the five Breakout Sessions + 1 Networking Reception (Evening or Breakfast)
- Digital badging sponsored by USF Corporate Training and Professional Education

Skills

- Business Development
- Business Financing
- Business Strategy
- Cash Flow Management
- DEI
- Government Contracting
- Networking
- Regulatory Compliance
- Strategic Planning
- Subcontract Management
- Supplier Chain Management

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