



WHAT
WE
DO _____ IS
BIGGER
THAN
DEI

In truth, RICE's work is about something higher.
Our efforts are aimed at **prosperity** — for individuals,
businesses, communities, and our nation.



Just some of the **corporate and philanthropic supporters** that have rallied behind our mission.



THE RICE COMMUNITY

Fueling our Work.

Leading companies, foundations, and organizations have come alongside RICE to help us create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive economy.

WELLS
FARGO

Ressler/Gertz
Family Foundation



PayPal

J.P.Morgan

Arthur M. Blank
Family Foundation



Walmart



The
Walt Disney
Company

amazon



FIFTH THIRD

Coca-Cola

K&S King &
Spaulding

Elavon

usbank



Google



Atlanta Life
INSURANCE COMPANY

fiserv.

BANK OF AMERICA



DELTA

Georgia
Power

TRUIST

Readiness × Uncommon Access™ = Growth

EVERY STORY SPEAKS GROWTH

RICE’S STAKEHOLDER BUSINESSES

+
006

Top 6 Industries:

- Professional Services
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Education
- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Food Service

OF THESE

63%

employ one or more people*

*The national average for Black-owned businesses is 4-5%

46%

have thrived beyond the startup stage*

*10x the national average

READINESS

RICE Stakeholders (Big IDEAS program participants) compared to similarly-situated, non-Stakeholder businesses:

\$2.4

for every \$1 of revenue generated on average

18%

annual growth rate* versus -10%

*Based on 2022-2024 data

2.75

new jobs created for every 1 new job

Source: McKinsey & Company; Atlanta Regional Commission, U.S. Census Bureau Annual Business Survey

UNCOMMON ACCESS™

The RICE Economy™ is strong.

\$91M

New revenue generated by RICE Stakeholders

4,125

Jobs created and sustained

\$245M

Personal disposable income generated for local residents

And Stakeholders directly benefit by participating in it.

\$3.4M

Direct grants to Stakeholder businesses

\$27.8M

RICE’s direct spend with Stakeholders since 2019

\$218M

Total revenue generated by Stakeholders (*19-’24)

\$19.3M

Capital accessed by Stakeholders in 2024

GROWTH

\$577M

Annual economic impact for the Metro Atlanta area

\$9.2M
in loans

\$5.4M
in equity investments

\$4.7M
in grants

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission Economic Impact Assessment

ABOUT THIS REPORT

In this volume of the RICE Report, we offer **a closer look** at the impact RICE is creating – by sharing data, highlighting stakeholder stories, and showcasing the community we’ve built.

We are proud to provide this window into the RICE story and share what’s next as it unfolds.

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INTRO



RICE IS

A business generator delivering Readiness and Uncommon Access™ to entrepreneurs

A new type of business community aimed at collective prosperity

A resource for corporations seeking business-ready partners

A driver of lasting economic impact

A working lab developing a research-based approach to accelerating and scaling businesses



The Russell Center reflects the spirit of an entrepreneur and leader who, through undeniable talent, a generous heart, and unwavering self-belief, achieved what some thought impossible.

RICE is named for **HERMAN J. RUSSELL, SR.**, one of America's first Black millionaires and a figure who represents the epitome of influential Black entrepreneurship. As a business and civic leader, Russell helped shape the city of Atlanta as we know it today. His legacy includes a deep dedication to philanthropy and a passion for entrepreneurship and education. Mr. Russell saw entrepreneurship as a pathway to wealth and equity for the Black community and, for America, the key to sustained prosperity. RICE lives on Atlanta's Westside, in the former headquarters of H. J. Russell & Company. The building is now home to the nation's largest nonprofit center of its kind.

Our goal is to embody H. J. Russell, Sr.'s legacy of success rooted in service.



“OUR GOAL IS TO EMBODY H. J. RUSSELL SR.’S LEGACY OF SUCCESS ROOTED IN SERVICE.”



VISION

Black prosperity →
multiplied
through business
ownership.

BUSINESS GROWTH
FINANCIAL WEALTH
HOLISTIC WELLNESS
POWERFUL RELATIONSHIPS
GENUINE COMMUNITY
RELENTLESS OPTIMISM
ABIDING BELIEF

**RICE is closing the
gap to prosperity.**

MISSION

Build.
Black.
Business.



WHAT WE DO

RICE delivers entrepreneurs access, opportunity, and exposure – to build wealth and grow collective prosperity.

With a deep commitment to community and a proven, evidence-based approach to growing businesses, RICE is creating a place of purpose and possibility – a space where entrepreneurs feel a true sense of belonging and are free to take risks, grow, and thrive. Here, support is real, connection is intentional, and success is built together.

From our homebase on Atlanta's Westside, we provide the training, tools, and experiences entrepreneurs need to move from one stage of growth to the next. **Our work is grounded in the belief that:**

Readiness × Uncommon Access™ = **Growth**

This equation powers our suite of programs – delivered by dedicated staff, expert faculty, and a one-of-a-kind network of nonprofit partners – all working together under one roof to accelerate possibility and prosperity.

WHO WE SERVE

RICE serves individuals at every stage of the entrepreneurship journey – from dreamers and creators to leaders and drivers.

These entrepreneurs span categories, delivering products and services in established and emerging industries. Whatever the case, our commitment is to see the whole entrepreneur, meet them where they are, and respond to their needs with an understanding, soul, and spirit not offered anywhere else.

We refer to our entrepreneurs as “Stakeholders”, reflecting the investment each leader has in the community we are cultivating together.

WE REFER TO OUR ENTREPRENEURS AS “STAKEHOLDERS”, REFLECTING THE INVESTMENT EACH LEADER HAS IN THE COMMUNITY WE ARE CULTIVATING TOGETHER.





Amia Mize

Founder and CEO
Takes a Village Transportation

LETTER FROM A RICE STAKEHOLDER

My call to entrepreneurship stems from my background. I was a mom at 15. I caught six buses a day to get to and from school to get a high school diploma; eight if I had to go to work. I know firsthand how transportation can impact everything. My company, **Takes a Village Transportation**, serves children and families, ensuring no child is left behind due to lack of transportation. The parents we serve tell me, when they see us, it's like Christmas every day.

I'm excited about where our company is now and where we're going, but the road hasn't always been smooth. When I found RICE, I felt I'd tapped all I could do with the business on my own and that I didn't have the tools I needed to scale. I signed up to attend one of RICE's first information sessions. At the time, the building itself was mostly concrete floors, construction noise, and yellow tape. But in the session, when I heard, *"We're building a place where you can feel safe to fail and fly,"* I knew I had to be here.

That special environment is exactly what RICE has been for me. To be honest, I don't need another co-working space. I have an office I can go to. What

I need is community. I need support. I need encouragement. And I also need the push that says, *"You have more to do."*

What sets RICE apart is the access we have here to training, exposure, funding opportunities, and the chance to work alongside brilliant, driven people who look like you. RICE staff members love you like family and at the same time are serious. It's clear they're here on a mission to get you ready.

I never saw myself as an entrepreneur. I never saw myself as an employer. I was always good enough to push other people's dreams, other people's hopes, other people's future. Now, I'm the one employing others so they can meet the needs of their families. To me, that's powerful.

**But in the session, when I heard,
"We're building a place where
you can feel safe to fail and fly,"
I knew I had to be here.**

I am deeply grateful for RICE, because when they saw the need to offer entrepreneurs like me the space and experience we were truly looking for, they got to work building it. Without a doubt, the RICE community is creating a blueprint right here on Atlanta's Westside. **We're giving the world something to see and it's undeniable.**

AMIA MIZE

**"WE'RE GIVING THE
WORLD SOMETHING
TO SEE AND
IT'S UNDENIABLE."**



Producing Ready
Entrepreneurs

Delivering Uncommon
Access™

Growing the Economy

Collaboration and
Community

IMPACT



WHAT IMPACT MEANS TO US

1.
**PRODUCING
READY
ENTREPRENEURS**

2.
**DELIVERING
UNCOMMON
ACCESS™**

3.
**GROWING
THE
ECONOMY**

4.
**COLLABORATION
AND
COMMUNITY**

FOR RICE, IMPACT MEANS:

1. PRODUCING READY ENTREPRENEURS

RICE Ready is our benchmark for excellence and our standard for developing entrepreneurs.

We define readiness in terms of **demonstrated mastery** of critical competencies and points of preparation. In every program and experience, we go beyond curriculum to instill an unbreakable sense of **resilience, belief, and belonging**.

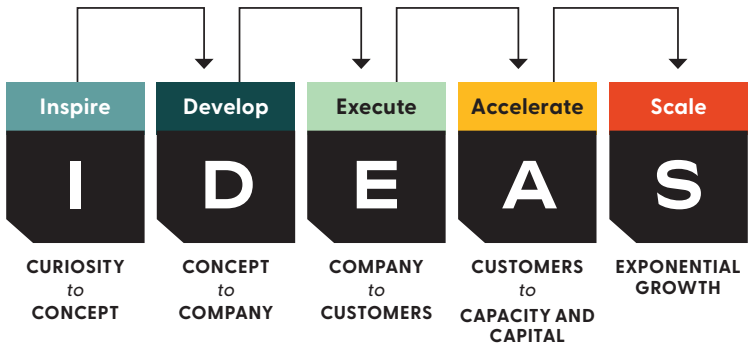
“At RICE, we believe readiness times Uncommon Access™ equals growth. But let’s be clear, readiness isn’t just about having a business plan. It’s about having the mindset, the muscle, and the support to go the distance. That’s what we mean when we say ‘RICE Ready.’ We build that readiness through everything we offer, from curriculum to community, from the amenities in our space to support entrepreneurs, to coaching circles, to Big IDEAS™. So, when we open the door to Uncommon Access™, you’re not just standing there, you’re stepping in ready to grow, ready to build, ready to lead.”

—SHALON BROWN
Senior Director, Marketing & Communications, RICE

Readiness × Uncommon Access™ = **Growth**

Big IDEAS™

A training platform that meets entrepreneurs where they are.



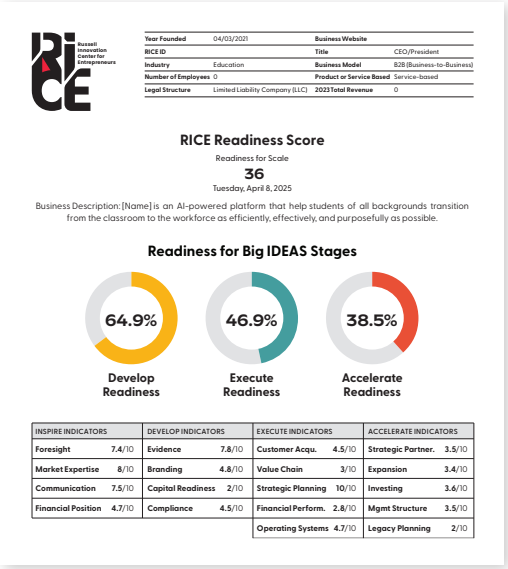
Our signature training platform, Big IDEAS™, is designed to help businesses continuously reach each readiness milestone. Our platform tailors training and resources to entrepreneurs’ specific needs, and accelerates their growth through each stage.

The RICE Readiness Score

Robust assessment in real time

The RICE Readiness Score is a composite of 18 readiness indicators; each aligned to research-backed milestones that increase a business’ capacity and capability to scale. Today in our programs, we use the Readiness score to meet each entrepreneur where they are, ensuring our approach is never one-size-fits-all.

Currently in development, our updated Readiness assessment will employ AI technology to deliver each entrepreneur an objective, up-to-the-minute read on their business and then, double as a recommendation engine for the tools, resources, and experiences RICE makes available.



Our method is working and our standard is high. RICE Ready entrepreneurs produce better performance and greater results.

	RICE Stakeholders Big IDEAS™ Program Participants	vs Similarly Situated, Non-Stakeholder Businesses
REVENUE GENERATED on average	\$2.4	for every \$1
ANNUAL GROWTH 2022–2024	+18%	versus –10%
NEW JOBS	2.75	for every 1

Jennifer Barbosa

Founder, International Supply Partners
Participant, RICE Supply Chain Accelerator™



In her years working in import/export and outsourced manufacturing with customers around the world, RICE Stakeholder, Jennifer Barbosa has seen a lot. In late 2023, Jennifer and her company, International Supply Partners, secured their largest order ever, from one of the biggest companies on the planet. As CEO, Jennifer was able to meet the moment because of the skills she gained as part of RICE's Supply Chain Accelerator™ (SCA) and the confidence she has with RICE at her back.



Although we did not join as a Stakeholder until about two years ago, our connection to RICE goes way back. I actually signed my name in one of the rooms before they plastered the walls. We are literally written into RICE's history, which makes me proud.

Through the support of RICE, I've learned to think and operate like a corporation, not just a small business. This isn't a hobby. This is something that we are looking to build legacy with. I want to be able to have the same impact the Russell family has had, where we are helping and supporting other individuals and businesses grow as we scale globally.

Backed By RICE

Oftentimes as an entrepreneur, you are building the plane while you're flying. You're trying to figure it out and you're not quite sure what to believe or who to trust. One of the gifts RICE gives us is access to solid, vetted resources.

Another gift is the fact that you can have very raw conversations about what's going on and not feel like you are inadequate. You're reminded that we're all here as human beings trying to build companies. The challenges you're experiencing aren't necessarily unique. And here, you have a family to support you and back you.

Becoming Partner-Ready

In 2023, I was a part of RICE's Supply Chain Accelerator™, a program designed to get Stakeholder businesses prepped and ready to work with large corporations. For

us, it was a perfect program to participate in. SCA helped us develop in a variety of areas — presentation skills, customer service, budgeting, negotiations, planning — essentially, how to be partner-ready.

In my business, I've gotten great experience, but this program helped me understand supply chain even deeper. The training focused on valuable skill sets that we were able to apply directly. And it came in very handy, very quickly.

Delivering for Amazon

Amazon reached out to us, specifically looking for a woman-owned supplier for their global procurement organization, which supports all of their facilities globally. The Amazon team was looking to streamline the equipment and supplies their locations needed when they hired a visually impaired employee. At that point, the average kit they used contained about 68 items and was the size of a couch. When Amazon presented the opportunity, they said they needed us to put these kits together and they needed them as quickly as possible.

The first and only thing that I wanted to do was run to RICE and talk to anyone I could to figure out how we were gonna do this. What I appreciated most was that everyone at RICE knew what we were being asked to do. And what I heard from everyone was, *"What can I do to help? Let me introduce you to this person. Is there something we can do?"*

That project was a huge lift for our team. From site visits, to user interviews, to design and customization, we presented our solution to the Amazon team and fulfilled the order within 30 days. That was our baptism. Throughout the whole experience, I relied on lessons I learned in the Supply Chain Accelerator™.

We've continued to work with Amazon on other things. We're live now with this solution in over 3,000 sites. We also supply high-visibility safety vests that are worn by Amazon employees in their facilities, and recently took on a project that's part of Amazon's sustainability initiative.



I know my stuff. And I know we're capable. If we weren't, Amazon wouldn't have given us that purchase order. But I think with RICE, we've become even stronger. SCA gave me a big boost — with the knowledge and exposure I needed to capture more opportunities. And from the RICE staff to the other Stakeholders, to the partner organizations here in-house, I have a gentle giant behind me ready to back me up.



FOR RICE, IMPACT MEANS:

2. DELIVERING UNCOMMON ACCESS™

To create outsized impact for entrepreneurs, we're intentional about going beyond teaching and training. **One way is by providing RICE Stakeholders Uncommon Access™.**

This is the missing piece RICE brings to change the game for entrepreneurs. For us, Uncommon Access™ means opening doors to **inspiration, opportunities, expert guidance, relationships, and capital.**



Access to Capital

\$3.4M

Through RICE, Stakeholders have received more than **\$3.4M** in **direct grants.**

Access to Opportunities

One recent example

In 2024, **15 participants** in RICE's Retail Readiness Academy™ were invited to pitch for "Fast Passes" to Walmart's Open Call supplier search event – the most Walmart has ever invited from a single city.

After Open Call in Bentonville, Arkansas, 5 RICE Stakeholder companies walked away with opportunities for distribution through Walmart.





Louis Deas

CEO, Try Deas and Other Treats
RICE Founding 100 Stakeholder



Stephanie Stuckey

CEO, Stuckey's
Stuckey's



Atlanta
150 miles
Wrens



150 MILES APART, two entrepreneurs are building brands. Pecan snack brands, to be exact. One is an upstart gaining traction, the other is refashioning a brand recognized by many in the South. Through RICE, Louis Deas of Try Deas and Other Treats and Stephanie Stuckey of Stuckey's, connected with each other to form a meaningful and lasting relationship.

It started with a “field trip” the two took to visit the Stuckey's facilities in rural Georgia. As a RICE Stakeholder, Deas was offered the special opportunity to see an established business in his industry up close and, in the process, get priceless peer mentoring from another founder. On his visit to Stuckey's, Deas gained access to **valuable knowledge, exposure, and perspective** on an industry that, in ways, remains **open to only a small group**. The exchange was just one instance of the **UNCOMMON ACCESS™** Deas has experienced as a RICE Stakeholder.

For Try Deas and Other Treats, RICE has opened doors and been **a true gamechanger**. For Stuckey, RICE stands out as **a vital resource** and change agent.

150 miles apart – but now connected – Try Deas and Stuckey's are changing the snack aisle with their respective brands, and both hold a vision of **a more equitable pecan industry**.

LD: “It was a business changing trip for me. Before the visit was even over, I started thinking entirely differently. It shifted my mindset and upped the level of ambition I had for my business. It helped me see further out to a clear benchmark. Looking back on it, that experience was great proof for me of the strength and power of network.”

SS: “You have to have the land, you have to have the capital. And you have to have the financial ability to wait seven years to have a merchantable crop. All of those factors weigh heavily against someone who is not multi-generational in land and farm ownership.”

LD: “RICE collapses time for us. What could take 5, 10, 15 years to study, to learn, to navigate, and understand, they're chopping that time down by half.”

“RICE has really provided a launch pad for me and my brand to go bigger and further than we expected...I live in the greatest city in the world for Black excellence. And I happen to be a Stakeholder at the Center that's designed to keep that legacy going.”

SS: “This incubator model that brings businesses together and provides opportunities for entrepreneurs who don't always get access to capital or access to the skills and training you need to succeed...that support is just amazing. It's needed. It's so needed.”

SS: “It's about making sure that everyone's at the table and creating an entry point for people who've been traditionally disenfranchised from certain types of opportunities. We're all stronger that way. We're all on Team Pecan. And, you know, we're all in this together.”



Dana Roberts

Monica Williams

Co-Founders, Red Drop
Participants, RICE Retail
Readiness Academy™
Winners, 2024 Black
Ambition Grand Prize



Dana Roberts and Monica Williams are Co-Founders of the fastest growing tween period care company in the country. In 2024, after delivering a high-stakes pitch, they were awarded \$1 million in funding from Black Ambition — a nonprofit initiative founded by multi-hyphenate artist and philanthropist, Pharrell Williams. Dana and Monica’s hard-fought path to that prize included time spent in RICE’s Retail Readiness Academy™ (RRA), where they received mentorship, exposure, and Uncommon Access™.

MW: A game changer for us was getting into RRA and having an entity [RICE], with people who know this part of the work saying, “Let’s help them. Let’s train them. Let’s give them mentors. Let’s give them a community.”

The Retail Readiness Academy™ provided us great access to mentorship from successful entrepreneurs who have extensive retail knowledge...It’s one thing to read about something or listen to a podcast. It’s a whole other situation and level of access to meet with the expert weekly and have their cell phone number. I remember when we were negotiating our first retail terms. We literally called [our mentor]. He answered and we were able to talk it through. That’s not an easy thing to do when you’re not

involved in a program like this. You just don’t have that kind of access to experts like that, in general.

DR: The Retail Readiness Academy™ put us in front of people we couldn’t have got in front of ourselves...To meet executives from some of the biggest retailers, to meet buyers who still email us today – that wouldn’t have happened without RICE.

MW: Stefon was our RRA mentor. He’s an entrepreneur who also has big corporate experience in marketing. So the level of expertise we could tap into was really uncommon – his ability to talk about his story, how he’s pitched his own business. And he demonstrated, he actually pitched for us.

MW: I’ll be honest. 2024 was a tough year for us and we really needed to raise money. We’d applied for a number of opportunities. RRA was one of them, Black Ambition was another. With Black Ambition, like many programs, you put together your application, you send it off to the ether, and you wait.

After several weeks as part of a small cohort within the bigger pool of other companies participating, we had to pitch; a couple of different times through a couple of rounds. From there, the finalists were actually solidified. And then, we were off to New York.

Stakes are always high when you pitch, but this felt different. It was clear we were up against some great people...You know everyone’s business is good. Our business is as good as theirs. Their business is as good as ours. And the playing field is level. It really comes down to how well I present this business for those three minutes I have on that stage.

DR: It’s a three minute pitch for a million dollars. I mean, think about that. You have three minutes to either get a yes or a no for a million dollars; for your business that you’ve been essentially trading your life for. This is your

life’s energy. And it’s down to three minutes. It’s crazy.

[On the pitch stage], Monica went up and she did what she had to do. She was focused. I could tell she was battling the clock, but she got through all of the major points...I was really proud. In a sense, it didn’t matter what the outcome was. I know she did her best, period.

When they called our name, it was a totally surreal moment. I was just about to pass out. Monica and I literally had to hold each other up walking to that stage. And then there’s Pharrell right there, and you’re like, well, should I hug him?



MW: As CEO of RICE, Jay Bailey is always talking about the people here between these four walls. And letting us know how great we are. That adds to the confidence and the swagger that you can have in any situation. And I remember when we won Black Ambition, one of the first people to congratulate us was Jay.

What he said to us was, “You’d better own this moment. This is really big.” Honestly, for us, it was just so surreal. When you’re in it, you really don’t understand it. But Jay, he understood the enormity of the moment. And we knew being in RRA helped us get there.

FOR RICE, IMPACT MEANS:

3. GROWING THE ECONOMY

We envision an American economy where our entrepreneurs bring greater prosperity to their communities while generating benefit for all.

The RICE Economy™ – a vibrant ecosystem of people, products, and services – is unlocking new value and writing a new narrative about what’s possible.

The RICE Economy™ intentionally circulates resources within our community, creating deep impact that distinguishes us from the typical program supporting entrepreneurs.

What we spark at RICE drives inclusive, long-term value.



“Since March 2021, RICE has always been a supporter of Amorous Tacos. As a first customer, they booked us to cater their inaugural Women Mean Business Brunch. That event placed us in front of so many companies and industry leaders. These same companies have become our clients and so much more.

RICE truly lives their mission to “Build. Black. Business.” and we are proud to be a part of the RICE community.”

—JEWEL ANDERSON, Amorous Tacos

THE
RICE
ECONOMY™

Driving Inclusive,
Long-Term Value

EMPLOYMENT

Thousands of **new jobs** are created and sustained as RICE Stakeholder businesses grow.

4,125 Jobs

currently sustained in Fulton County, GA
by RICE Stakeholder businesses¹

WEALTH & PROSPERITY

RICE Stakeholder businesses are producing hundreds of millions in **new income** for local residents.

\$245M

in additional personal wealth for
local residents in 2023

AT
RICE...

- 40+ FTEs focused on accelerating entrepreneurs
- 600+ businesses receiving Uncommon Access™, opportunity, and exposure

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission Economic Impact Assessment; RICE internal analysis



COMMERCE

When Stakeholder businesses expand to capture more opportunity, they reinvest in the RICE Economy™ through the **mutual exchange** of dollars, contracts, products, and services.

REVENUE

Fueled by the RICE ecosystem, our innovative entrepreneurs are generating **substantial revenue**.

\$103M \$219M+

Revenue generated in 2023 Revenue generated since 2019

MOMENTUM

RICE makes **intentional investment** in Stakeholder businesses by including them as part of its own supply chain.

\$8.3M \$27.8M+

RICE's direct spend with Stakeholders in 2024 RICE's direct spend with Stakeholders since 2019

More than **\$500M**
in **economic impact**
for Metro Atlanta
every year

¹ Jobs sustained includes: direct jobs added by Stakeholder businesses, indirect jobs required to produce intermediate goods, jobs required due to additional spending by direct and indirect workers

Inspiration

FALL 2018 – Channing Baker was an employee of startup commercial general contractor, FS360. The company had been awarded the contract to transform the former headquarters of H. J. Russell Company at 504 Fair St. into an incubator/accelerator focused on underserved entrepreneurs.

It couldn't have been any more perfect for me at the time. To be a young, Black guy working for a Black general contractor in Atlanta on a project named for H. J. Russell? And to be building out a business incubator that's being set up for people like me? I mean, it meant everything.

BUILDING AS HE CLIMBS

Channing Baker

Founder, Evolve Contractors
RICE Stakeholder since 2019



Preparation

RICE helped bring out the businessman and entrepreneur that were always inside of me.

I had always known I wanted to be an entrepreneur. My dad raised me to be an entrepreneur and had always spoken life into me... He gave me all the building blocks of success for a business owner in construction. So I already had that foundation. I knew I needed to combine those skill sets and my own belief with action, though. So, I made the leap from employee to entrepreneur and started Clayton Channing Consulting.

I decided to become a Stakeholder at RICE and never looked back. My attitude was to soak up and be involved in every single class, course, conversation, trip, meeting, and side session.

Growing the economy:

At that point, there wasn't a whole lot of hiring or a whole lot of buying. But the one thing I could do was help develop other Black entrepreneurs.

I chose to spend my Saturdays here at RICE, invite anybody who would come, and share with them what I had learned. Before going out on my own, I had been fortunate to work in corporate construction for a long time. I had been doing it for 10, 12 years. So, I spent my time here on Saturdays, helping others grow their businesses and pouring into them.

Evolution

It was 2022, October 26th. I remember it like it was yesterday. I was sitting in a huddle room here at RICE when I signed off on the Secretary of State name registration for my current company, Evolve Contractors.

At RICE, I've had access to the building, all the programs on the schedule, and the financial resources in the building like ACE (Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs) and Invest Atlanta...You have no idea how convenient it is and how much of a blessing it is, to simply go upstairs and knock on the door and get guidance or an answer to any question, no matter how small it might seem.

Growing the economy:

At Evolve, the heart of our mission is Community, Ownership, and Innovation. Under "Community", we have a near-term goal to assist with 100 residential roofing projects in Atlanta. We're partnering with organizations that build houses and help people in the community with homes.

The other piece – over the long term – is to empower Black entrepreneurs going through the exact same thing that I was going through when I first started out. The goal is to elevate at least 100 construction-based subcontracting businesses that are looking to scale and grow.

Elevation

For one of Evolve's latest projects – a joint venture with FS360 – we were successful in hiring over 60% Black contractors for a \$7 million project. That's millions in revenue going directly into Black business owners' hands...There are so many competent, qualified, educated, skilled, and thorough Black subcontracting businesses that are operating with excellence here in Atlanta, Georgia. Why not use them?

We gave some of them a shot. And guess what? The shot we gave them, it's come back around with the shot I'm getting to work on projects here in Atlanta, one being the Centennial Yards.

A multi-billion dollar urban revitalization project in downtown Atlanta.

Growing the economy:

Evolve Contractors is boosting the RICE Economy and Atlanta's economy:

JOBS CREATED:

9 full-time positions created as of April 2025

EMPLOYMENT INCOME GENERATED:

Over \$950,000 in total employment income generated by December 2025

WORKFORCE TRAINING:

11 new roofing specialists trained to date through Evolve's internal training program

Evolve continues to host monthly whiteboard sessions at RICE for early-stage founders



RICE SUPPORTER

ANNA ROACH



*Executive Director & CEO,
Atlanta Regional Commission*



“

The Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs is a proven resource that is unlocking opportunities for Black businesspeople in Atlanta and beyond. A look at the data makes it clear: **the entire region benefits in terms of better job prospects and increased economic activity.** I can't wait to see what the future holds for the Russell Center and the visionary businesses it supports.

—ANNA ROACH

”

FOR RICE, IMPACT MEANS:

4. COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY

In serving entrepreneurs, our goal is always to generate impact that expands beyond our walls.

By sharing what we've built, how we work, and what we're learning, we hope to offer a model that others can adopt and adapt – locally and globally.

For us, impact ultimately means creating shared value that strengthens our economy and uplifts the communities we serve.

JPMorganChase | Nasdaq

Revitalizing Innovation

Models of Equitable Entrepreneurship Across the United States

EQUITY INNOVATION LEADERS

Regional Strengths Fuel Innovation

Georgia: Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs, Atlanta

Recognition for building a nonprofit dedicated to supporting Black businesses and having driven \$450 million in total economic activity.

Model

Type: 501(c)(3) nonprofit

Starting Line Challenge: Address the systemic barriers Black entrepreneurs face.

Solution: Launch a nonprofit dedicated to supporting the needs of Black businesses. RICE exists to nurture genius and convert it into greater wealth, with an evidence-based, reliable method for building Black businesses.

Overview

Founded in 2019, RICE is the largest center in the world focused on Black business. A remarkable 46% of RICE businesses have thrived beyond the startup stage, more than ten times the national average. RICE businesses are valued at five times the average value of Atlanta's Black-owned businesses. So far, RICE stakeholders have created hundreds of jobs, generated more than \$100 million in revenue, and driven \$450 million in total economic activity.

Insight

"Atlanta is at a crossroads—with RICE squarely at the center, occupying the nexus of access, opportunity, exposure, and impact. We are called to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs and unite all Atlantans, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, to participate and contribute. Something special is happening on Atlanta's Westside. It's game time. I hope you will join us." —James M. "Jay" Bailey, President and CEO

EQUITY INNOVATION LEADERS

Equity Innovation Leaders by Location and Focus

Theme	State	Organization	Key
Leveraging Regional Strengths Fuels Innovation	Georgia	Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs	RICE is grown through a prime
	Texas	The Inn District	The Inn District
KPI-Driven Innovation is Critical	Illinois	Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (IDCEO) Office of Economic Equity and Empowerment (OE3)	IDCEO system special access
	North Carolina	NC IDEA Foundation	The Fu
Collaboration Powers Lasting Change	Florida	Miami-Dade Innovation Authority	MDIA bridges the gap between private and public sectors to support regional innovation and commercialization of technologies
	Michigan	Invest Detroit	Invest Detroit is a leader in the coalition aiming to address Michigan's lack of early-stage investment capital to prevent talent and business drain to neighboring states
Continuous Experimentation Strengthens Data Models	Maryland	TEDCO	TEDCO focuses on economic empowerment and inclusive growth, prioritizing underrepresented entrepreneurs in tech and life sciences

A MODEL AND A MAGNET

In 2024, a JP Morgan Chase and Nasdaq-funded study of entrepreneurial models across the U.S. highlighted RICE as **a model of equitable entrepreneurship**. This comprehensive analysis was a collaboration among the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center, Heartland Forward, and Penn State University's Evidence-to-Impact Collaborative.

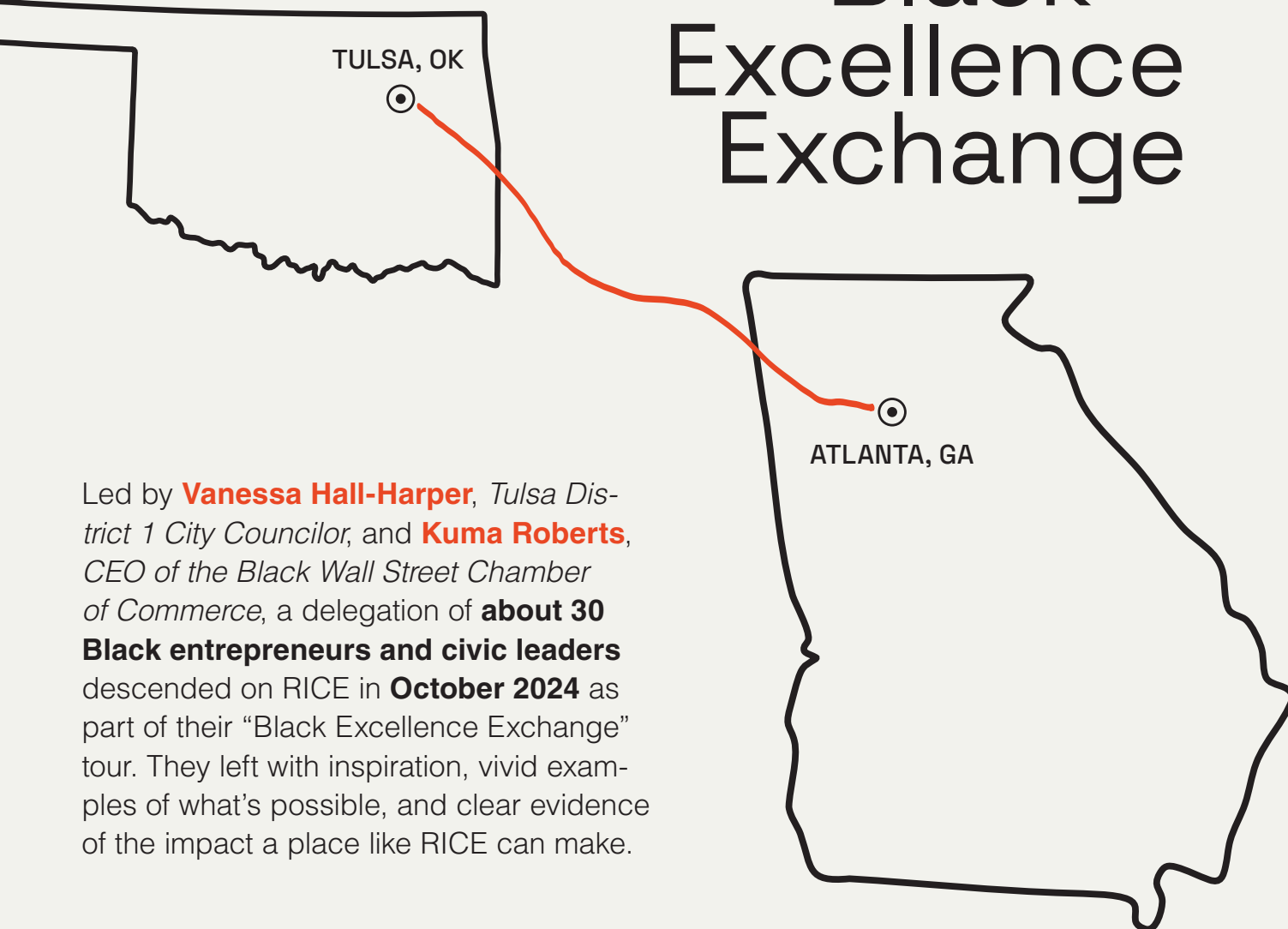
Among the hundreds of visitors RICE welcomes each month, were Kenyan leaders and entrepreneurs, Jackson Looseyia and Salaash Ole Morompi who toured the Center last year on behalf of Mara Siana.

“The Russell Center was very inspiring. It was motivating and really encouraging. When you listen to the story of how it all started and how much [the Center's] actually spread its wings and helped people then you think, “Well anything is possible.”

—SALAASH OLE MOROMPI,
Co-Founder, Mara Siana (Mara Ripoi Community Conservancy at Maasai Mara, Kenya)



Tulsa-Atlanta Black Excellence Exchange



Led by **Vanessa Hall-Harper**, *Tulsa District 1 City Councilor*, and **Kuma Roberts**, *CEO of the Black Wall Street Chamber of Commerce*, a delegation of **about 30 Black entrepreneurs and civic leaders** descended on RICE in **October 2024** as part of their “Black Excellence Exchange” tour. They left with inspiration, vivid examples of what’s possible, and clear evidence of the impact a place like RICE can make.

Kuma Roberts

CEO, Black Wall Street Chamber of Commerce



Vanessa Hall-Harper

Tulsa District 1 City Councilor

“We took 28 people to visit RICE, and I think they had 28 hundred different feelings and emotions around what they got from the experience. A theme emerged during our trip: ‘Exposure elicits expectations.’”

“What’s amazing about RICE is, there’s real economic impact coming from the entrepreneurs that are coming out of there.”

“Something we noticed at RICE, and are trying to replicate, is the ecosystem of technical support that is available to the entrepreneurs...marketing teams, CDFIs, legal resources, video production, all of that. The things we saw located at RICE were just absolutely fascinating.”

“I loved that we saw a lot of the entrepreneurs’ products on display, evidence of who RICE has helped. I think our community [in Tulsa] needs to see that there are success stories. That was also a part of what I took away.”

“I’ve been following RICE since reading an article announcing it, before the Center was even built out. Back then, I knew it was coming and understood it was being designed specifically for Black people in a Black community. And I knew that’s what I wanted to duplicate.”

“One of my goals as a City Councilor for my district, District One, is to improve our quality of life. Economic development is a huge part of that. And not just that economic development takes place, but that it happens with us as the drivers of it.”

“That’s what happened with Greenwood. People would come in that spirit. People would come in and say, ‘I have a business idea.’ Business leaders would fund that young man or that young woman that came in from Mississippi or Alabama, or wherever. And then, once their business became successful, that entrepreneur turned around and helped the next person. When we refer to the spirit of Greenwood, that’s what we’re talking about...It grew so massive that it gained the attention of Booker T. Washington. When he came, he said this was a “Black Wall Street.”

“I just love the environment that exists in this space. It’s the beauty. And when I say ‘beauty’, I’m talking about going into a space and you see nothing but Blackness. That’s what I’m talking about. And having a space where you can be comfortable and know you’re going to get the support that’s right for you.”





Raphael Warnock
U.S. Senator

Nikema Williams
U.S. Representative

Jon Ossoff
U.S. Senator

Kamala Harris
Former U.S. Vice President



Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives

Jamie Dimon
Chairman and CEO, JP Morgan Chase & Co.



Dan Schulman
Former President and CEO, PayPal



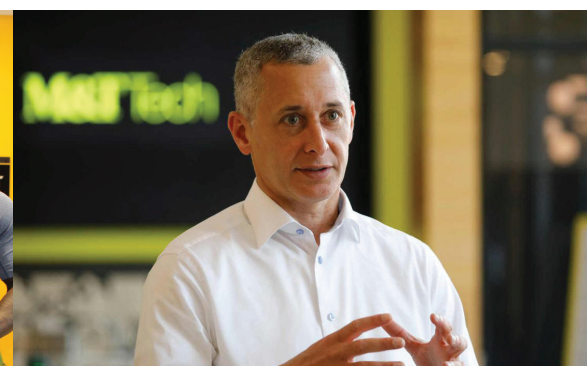
Robert F. Smith
Chairman and CEO, Vista Equity Partners

Any given week, luminaries in business, culture, and public service arrive at our doors; to experience RICE for themselves and lend support to our Stakeholders. These are just some of the leaders who've recently paid a visit.

We attract excellence.



Andre Dickens
Mayor of Atlanta



René Jones
Chairman and CEO, M&T Bank



Thasunda Duckett
President and CEO, TIAA



Gunjan Kedia
President and CEO, U.S. Bancorp

Andrew Cecere
Executive Chairman, U.S. Bancorp



Pinky Cole
Founder, Slutty Vegan

Derrick Hayes
Founder, Big Dave's Cheesesteaks



Rosalind Brewer
Former CEO, Walgreens and Sam's Club



Carol Tomé
CEO, UPS



Ronnie DeVoe
Singer and Entrepreneur



CeeLo Green
Singer-Songwriter and Producer



2 Chainz
Rapper, Actor, and Entrepreneur

World-Class Faculty
and Staff

Experienced
Stakeholders Giving
Back

Partners Lending
Priceless Expertise

*The magic of RICE is
our people.*

PEOPLE





MANUFACTURING SYSTEMS FOR SUCCESS AND SCALE



At RICE, I direct RICE’s Logistics Launchpad™, a hands-on space focused on helping entrepreneurs get physical products to market. The Launchpad includes an innovation lab that serves as a space for 3D printing, instruction, and consultation on anything related to product development. I also run one of RICE’s extension programs, Product Development Pathways™.

BEFORE RICE

Prior to coming to the Russell Center, I ran my own Product Development company for eight years. Because I speak both Spanish and Mandarin, we were also able to establish a significant Import/Export business, working between China



Shakiri
Murrain

Director of Innovation Solutions

EXPERTISE IN:
Supply Chain
Product Development
Grassroots Community Development

and Latin America. Along the way, my company developed hundreds of products in collaboration with Daymond John, of FUBU and Shark Tank fame, as part of the Daymond John Academy.

“What I bring to this table is experience as a builder. I’ve created products and taken them to market. And I’ve started three companies. They’ve lived, they’ve died, they’ve grown. I’ve seen them scale.”

As entrepreneurs come to me now, it’s important for me to share my battle scars...to not just show them the things that I think will work in their companies, but also offer a reality check at times.

POV

In building Product Development Pathways™ we’ve taken a multi-faceted approach. We’ve realized it’s not just prototype development. It’s also getting Stakeholders ready for raising capital, understanding their target market, and customer acquisition strategy. These are some critical steps that I wish I had known before.

We have to be very intentional about how we build community so everyone feels like they have a stake in the bigger picture of what we’re doing here. I would argue a big part of RICE’s secret sauce is our entrepreneurs who are three to five years ahead, still doing it every single day, but agreeing to come back and give of themselves so this community can grow. That’s 2+2 equaling 10.

“If you have a developed community, there is nothing you can’t do...There’s so much power in numbers. When you get multiple people moving in the same direction, it’s really hard to stop anything you’ve all decided on.”

MISSION

My mission at RICE is manufacturing. More specifically, to build a system that allows Stakeholders to consistently scale product-based businesses.

This work impacts me deeply because I think about the story of my great grandfather, T. J. Huddleston, who was a leader and trailblazer like Herman J. Russell, Sr. It’s not just a story. To me, it’s inspiration, and a call to be a



continuation of Black history. I feel like our entire goal in this center is to set up the next generation of entrepreneurs to be able to do it better, faster, bigger than we did it.

PAYING IT FORWARD

I look forward to continuing to invest in these entrepreneurs and seeing this place grow. **I have a dream of building the Logistics Launchpad™ into a global center of excellence for product development; A place where, right here, you can conceive and build products and launch them anywhere around the world. It’s already happening. And I’ll be honest with you, I’m not leaving until it’s done.**

“WHAT I BRING
TO THIS TABLE
IS EXPERIENCE AS
A BUILDER.”



NURTURING BRANDS FROM STARTUP TO STOREFRONT

I am a Founding 100 Stakeholder at RICE and have been scaling my company here since connecting with the Center in 2018. I'm now also an Entrepreneur in Residence leading RICE's Retail Readiness Academy™(RRA), a program we've designed to get aspiring brands retail ready.

In August, 2023, Jay Bailey reached out to me and said, "Hey, I want you to help us put something together that you wish you had had when you were starting out in retail." My response was, "OK, challenge accepted."

I believe all great things start with, "Wouldn't it be cool if?"

So when we sat down to design what became the Retail Readiness Academy™, we said, "Wouldn't it be cool if we could bring folks together that are doing this work in silos, trying to figure it out on their own? Wouldn't it be cool to create an environment where people can come together and learn and have a safe place to ask questions? Wouldn't

Terri-Nichelle Bradley

Founder and CEO,
Brown Toy Box

Director,
RICE Retail Readiness Academy™

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Designer and Co-Director of RICE's Retail Readiness Academy™
- 2X Founder
- Brown Toy Box distributed in Target stores nationwide; Launching in Walmart Fall 2025
- Brown Toy Box flagship store opening May 2025
- Member, Girl Scouts Board of Directors
- Member, Board of Directors, City of Atlanta Women's Entrepreneurship Initiative

it be cool if you had a place where you could confidently say, "I don't know."? Because that's one of the things that we don't always get to do.

A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE

With RRA, we were intentional about creating sprints for different things – starting with Retail 101 then going from macro to micro to talk about Marketing, Supply Chain, financing your venture. We talk about all of those different things. But in all of it, we keep coming back to something that's especially true for our entrepreneurs—**addressing the issue of confidence; confidence to ask questions, fully show up, represent your brand, and tell your authentic brand story.**

Early on, RICE said, "We don't want to build anything for you without you." I think that's really important because oftentimes with these kinds of programs, they'll build things for you and never ask, "What do you need?"

It speaks well of RICE that they convene Stakeholders to ask, "What is it that you need?" And here's one: "What is it we're not delivering on or that you're not getting?" Because people don't usually ask that. **Addressing those concerns and creating programs that are very Stakeholder-centric really separates what RICE is doing from what everybody else is doing.**

ON A MISSION

What compelled me to help build out the Retail Readiness Academy™ was the realization that this was an opportunity to formalize what I was kind of already doing, only now with the support and structure of RICE behind me.

When I look at the retail landscape, I want to be able to walk into a store and really know the brands, know the founders of those brands, and the work that they put into those brands. I'm also on a mission – starting with my own company – to disrupt different categories.

While I'm here at RICE, my purpose is amplified in so many ways. For example, when we're having class and people bring up a challenge they're having, we can talk about it, family style, and really take it apart. It sounds like we're just solving business challenges, but this is their life's work.

FUTURE OF RRA

This next cohort of RRA is going to be phenomenal. The first cohort proved we can take a brand from square one to that first retail account. **Now we have the opportunity to take brands from their first experience selling into a retailer to really blowing it out the park.**



"I'M ON A MISSION—STARTING WITH MY OWN COMPANY—TO DISRUPT DIFFERENT CATEGORIES."

A collaborative ecosystem **working together under one roof** to promote prosperity and build businesses.

Since Day One, our intent has been to serve our Stakeholders by doing things differently.

We know no single organization can meet every need for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

So, we choose to break down silos and invite others in – to take up residence at 504 Fair Street.

What we've built is a **one-of-a-kind ecosystem** where **RICE** and **mission-aligned experts collaborate** to provide Stakeholders Uncommon Access™ to the capital, connections, and resources they need.

Capital Sources | Civic & Community Connections | Technical Assistance & Business Consulting | Data & Technology

RICE'S IN-HOUSE PARTNERS



BRANDPRENUER



GreenLight Fund



DR. VIVIAN GREENTREE



*Member, RICE Board of Directors
SVP, Head of Global Corporate Citizenship,
Fiserv*

“

RICE is not just a center of excellence for Atlanta-based entrepreneurs; it's a national beacon for innovation and empowerment. Fiserv's partnership with RICE reflects our shared vision of creating structural inclusion and accelerating opportunities for all. Together, we're not just impacting individual businesses. **We're transforming our communities and driving economic growth on a national scale.**

At Fiserv, we know that small business drives big business and RICE is right in the middle of that. At RICE, you see the entire cross section of the small business ecosystem, providing entrepreneurs with unprecedented access, opportunity, and exposure. The experience is never one-size-fits-all. Everyone



there is being connected in a way that makes sense at the right time for the right person in the right way.

RICE is truly a place where hard work meets opportunity. And there's nothing lucky about it. Behind the scenes, there's tremendous work being done to get Stakeholders prepared – so that when opportunity arrives, they're ready for it.

Whether it's an enterprise or a small business, we all need each other to be successful. And RICE is a place of convening and purposeful community that's leading the way.

—DR. VIVIAN GREENTREE

”

What We've Figured Out
Programming
Place

ONWARD



WHAT WE'VE FIGURED OUT

Through deep reflection, continuous learning, and real-time experimentation, we've uncovered critical truths that are now shaping the way we serve, scale, and support entrepreneurs.

The experience is what transforms

Our mission cannot be fulfilled through curriculum alone. While education and training matter, they're only part of the equation. What truly transforms entrepreneurs at RICE is the experience; the sense of belonging, the authentic relationships, the culture of support, and an undeniable energy you feel when surrounded by people who believe in what's possible.

Entrepreneurs don't just come to RICE to learn. They come to connect and to be seen. Our community holds Stakeholders accountable, inspires them, and keeps them going, all while delivering connections that open doors to new opportunities and possibilities.

At RICE, experience is at the core of our strategy. Every moment, every interaction, every program is designed to create the conditions for transformation and spark something more. When people walk through our doors they feel valued and part of something bigger. That feeling is our differentiator.

Readiness is greater than regimen

In our work with entrepreneurs of all types, we've learned that readiness is not one-size-fits-all. Too many programs follow a fixed curriculum, assuming all entrepreneurs need the same things at the same time. But real readiness is nuanced. It's about diagnosing individual needs, not prescribing blanket solutions.

At RICE, we've moved away from rigid programming in favor of a diagnostic, staged model that assesses where entrepreneurs are and what gaps they need to close. Whether it's financial management, operational clarity, or leadership development, we've learned to meet our Stakeholders where they are, not where we assume they should be.

This shift has been transformative. We're not just teaching, we're tailoring. Our approach recognizes that entrepreneurship is a deeply personal journey, and no two paths to readiness are the same.

Entrepreneurs need a safe place to dream, build, and belong

Prosperity doesn't start with profits. It starts with psychological safety and an ability to take risks, make mistakes, and fully be seen.

RICE is a place where people can bring their whole selves, not just their business plans. Our staff, Stakeholders, partners, and community members have helped RICE create an environment where full support is not conditional, it's embedded in everything we do.

We've learned that when people feel safe, they create. When they feel hope, they build. When they're surrounded by community, they rise. We're creating a space to do business, and even more important, a space to build legacy, power, and possibility.

Sustainable change means going beyond programs

One of our most powerful realizations is this: we are not a charity, we're an economic engine. What we've built at RICE goes beyond programming. It's a self-sustaining ecosystem. The RICE Economy™ circulates opportunity, capital, and support within our community, and is tangible proof that investing in entrepreneurs is not symbolic, it's strategic.

Through our intentional procurement practices, we're demonstrating that Black businesses can, and should, be at the center of supply chains, construction projects, operations, and innovation. From the firms we hire and the furniture in our space, to the music we play and the water we serve, RICE is powered by the entrepreneurs we support.

With over \$600 million circulating within our network, we're demonstrating a model of intentional, measurable reinvestment. We've learned that true economic mobility doesn't start with a grant, it starts with a purchase order.



Programming

Evolving How We Empower: Fresh Pathways and Stronger Pipelines

At RICE, innovation is a mindset. It's how we continuously challenge ourselves to reimagine what entrepreneurs need now and prepare them for what is next. Rather than launching a slate of "new" programs, we've honed something far more powerful; **how we execute, deliver, and evolve our programming to meet the demands of a rapidly shifting entrepreneurial environment.**

Take our Supply Chain Accelerator™, for example. In 2024, the focus was on access to enterprise and Fortune 100 opportunities. But in 2025, that same accelerator will pivot to cover import and export strategies and tariff navigation. The structure remains but what changes is relevance. We believe that's where innovation lives, not in the title of our programs, but in how they stay in step with our entrepreneurs' realities.

Programs like Product Development Pathways™(PDP) are no longer just "entry points"; they're intelligent pipelines. PDP is designed to support first prototypes of any kind, including SaaS products, hardware, or consumer goods. Whether someone is launching a tech platform, a physical product, or a retail-ready item, we meet them where they are and equip them with the tools to go further.

From there, entrepreneurs can seamlessly advance to Retail Readiness Academy™(RRA), where they'll refine their go-to-market strategies and scale into traditional and digital commerce platforms. With new integrations planned – in collaboration with partners like Ecomspaces – our Launch Pad will become even more dynamic, bridging ideation to revenue with intentionality and speed.

Future-Forward with Georgia AIM

Perhaps the boldest signal of our innovation ethos is our collaboration with Georgia AIM, a first-of-its-kind initiative designed to bring AI to the people through a 53-foot mobile studio and statewide engagement strategy. In partnership with the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Technologists of Color, and KITT Labs, RICE is helping activate communities across Georgia, introducing AI as both an opportunity and an on ramp to the future of manufacturing.

Through hands-on events, VR simulations, robotics demonstrations, and direct training, we are reaching thousands of entrepreneurs across the state with a clear message: This technology belongs to you too. Our goal is not just awareness, it's workforce readiness, job creation, and economic mobility. With a target of 200 jobs and 4,800 meaningful engagements, **we are connecting people to possibilities they've never seen before and creating the infrastructure to turn those possibilities into prosperity.**

Always Relevant. Always Radical.

At RICE, programming doesn't get old, it evolves. We don't chase trends. We build what's needed. With every refinement, every activation, and every intentional collaboration, we are shaping a future where entrepreneurs are not just prepared for change, they're leading it.

**AT RICE,
PROGRAMMING
DOESN'T
GET OLD, IT
EVOLVES.**



Deepening our impact by expanding America's largest nonprofit center of its kind.

The Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs (RICE) is in a powerful phase of growth and transformation. With a \$44.4 million capital campaign underway and more than 500 entrepreneurs on the waiting list, we are expanding both our physical footprint and our impact. In Spring of 2025, we unveiled three major additions: a state-of-the-art Learning Lab, a rooftop space, and a new outdoor amphitheater. Each space is designed to enhance learning, collaboration, and community engagement.

As we enter our third phase, our vision is even more ambitious. A 7,500-square-foot expansion along Northside Drive will bring the total facility size to 70,000 square feet. This world-class facility will be LEED Silver certified, reinforcing RICE's

commitment to innovation, sustainability, and excellence in every dimension.

As the largest hub of its kind in the U.S., RICE is laser-focused on building 1,000 companies, generating 3,000 jobs, and driving \$2 billion in new economic value over the next decade. Our ambition not only signals demand, it reflects our deep commitment to reshaping Atlanta's business landscape through access, opportunity, and intentional community.

5,000 sq. ft.
Learning Lab

Reimagined
2,500 sq. ft. lobby
and mezzanine

2,200 sq. ft.
rooftop experience
space

7,500 sq. ft.
expansion along
Northside Drive



AL MCRAE



Chair, RICE Board of Directors
President, Bank of America, Atlanta

**On the Center's impact,
building momentum, and
taking the long view.**

“

What drew you to the opportunity to serve as one of RICE's board members?

I've been in banking for 21 years. At one point, I managed wealth as a part of my job and was always interested in where that wealth began. Many times, I saw that the seed of wealth was entrepreneurship. Someone years and years and years ago started a business. So seeing that entrepreneurship was one of the cornerstones of wealth creation, when I had an opportunity to work with an organization that said, *“How can we start to plant those seeds in communities where that normally doesn't happen?”* it intrigued me.

What would you say is the biggest difference RICE is making?

Growing and broadening the base of entrepreneurs in our city. A lot of the entrepreneurs RICE serves live in parts of the city that haven't necessarily been invested in. Developing entrepreneurs and helping grow their businesses is RICE's way of investing.

What this also means is, for our supporters and our investors who might otherwise go out into communities and try to find pockets of where to invest, they can just invest directly in RICE. It's a centralized place to place investment that then spreads out its tentacles – through entrepreneurs and their businesses – across the Atlanta community and across the state.

What's one of RICE's long-term objectives that energizes you?

We want entrepreneurship to be something that's accessible to everyone. And from that perspective, start to see gains in places that, normally, we haven't seen them.

This isn't just about what we're going to do over the next five, ten, or fifteen years. If you think about the way wealth is created and the way that seeds are

planted and then grown, this is going to be over a century of work that we're embarking on.

It's ten years from now, what does RICE look like?

In ten years, I think we first will want to know that we've provided a certain level of impact for the entrepreneurs that have come into our community, but then, those entrepreneurs are giving back, right?

They're coming back and telling their stories, mentoring, providing access and resources to younger generations of entrepreneurs that are coming through the program. It's similar to how Mr. Russell created his legacy through his children – the idea that once you've achieved, now it's your responsibility to help others achieve.

Today, we're building the engine that gets that fly-wheel going...where individuals are creating more jobs. Those jobs are then leading to greater wealth creation. Then, that wealth gets used to create more businesses, and so on.

We're pushing a heavy ball right now, but the good thing about pushing something heavy is once you get it going, the momentum feeds on itself and it starts to roll on its own.

”

RICE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Bank of America, Atlanta



Sylvia Russell
Former President,
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Carla Chaney
EVP and CHRO,
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Vivian Greentree
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H. Jerome Russell, Jr.
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LEADERSHIP

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Chief Experience Officer

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Shakiri Murrain
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Breanna O’Neal
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Ashley Scott
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On a mission to close the
prosperity gap.

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Cascade United Methodist Church	Holder Construction	Robert W. Woodruff Foundation	Verizon
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Columbia Residential	Jabian Consulting	SodexoMagic	
Comcast	Jackson Spalding	State Farm	
		Sylvia Russell	



At RICE, we believe impact is more than a number – it’s a movement. An economic mobility engine generating over \$500 million in annual impact, built by entrepreneurs who, once underestimated, are now undeniable. Over 4,000 jobs sustained by ideas that were nurtured, not dismissed. This is the RICE Economy™ – where Readiness meets Uncommon Access™, and potential becomes power.

We are building more than businesses – we are building futures. For families. For communities. For a city that deserves to rise together. And this is only the beginning.

What inspires me most is not just what we’ve accomplished, but how we’ve done it – with heart, hustle, and an unshakable belief in what’s possible. Small business growth isn’t a side note to our economy – it is the economy. Every win here reverberates far beyond our walls.

We’re not slowing down. We’re scaling up. With fierce intentionality. With relentless purpose. And with an open hand to those ready to help shape what’s next.

The momentum is real. The mission is working. And we’re just getting started.



JAMES “JAY” BAILEY
President and CEO