If you have been keeping up with the news, you know our President Barack Obama is dealing with the budget. During this same time, Cleveland's Mayor Frank Jackson is waiting for his budget to be approved.

If you have been keeping up with the news, you know our President Barack Obama is dealing with the budget. During this same time, Cleveland's Mayor Frank Jackson is waiting for his budget to be approved.

William Leidesdorf was America's first millionaire of Black descent. During the 1840s, prior to the gold rush, the native of the Dutch West Indies engaged in trade and real estate, built San Francisco's first hotel, and was the city's first treasurer.

In 2011, the question that comes to mind is where is the money? Taking a great line from the 1996 movie "Jerry Maquire…" Cuba Gooding told the character "Show me the money." This problem is not a Black thing but an economic tragedy.

In the 1900's, Black people were mainly served by Black business owners, who began to form associations such as the *National Negro Business League*. Massive migration to northern cities by rural Black Southerners, during the first World War, increased the incomes of many and led to a pouring of African American dollars into Black-owned businesses.

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed, and now going into 47 years of this great law, but the memo has never been circulated around to federal employees who deal with the massive procurement system of the federal government.

From one presidential administration to the next, nothing of substance seems to happen in terms of Black businesses winning procurement dollars. There is a lot of corruption, discrimination, and bullying that disallows a small Black business to get a foothold. There needs to be a massive overhaul in how diversity in federal procurement should be set up.

With Cleveland not having a true Black Chamber of Commerce recognized by the National Chamber office that can provide substantive support in advocating, developing, and promoting Black-owned businesses in both public and private sector forums, there's no place for local Black owned businesses to go for help.

The National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) was incorporated in 1993 by Harry Alford and Kay DeBow, who in 2011 continue as president/CEO and executive vice president, respectively. Alford is also a board member of the United States Chamber of Commerce . It is organized as a
501(c)3
corporation
and claims at least 190 chapters within the United States. The National Black Chamber of Commerce also has chapters in Africa, Brazil and Europe.

The NBCC reaches 100,000 Black owned businesses. There are 1 million Black owned businesses in the United States. Black businesses account for over $100 billion in annual sales. African Americans have over $800 billion in expendable income each year according to the US Bureau of Census.

When I was growing up in the Lee/Harvard area, I could walk to the corner store and be greeted by the Black store owner or one of his children whom I went to school with. When my parents went to fill up their cars, the gas station owner was an African American.

Now, let's fast forward to the present time. The gas station, the corner store, and the grocery store are all owned by people who don't look like me and don't care what happens in our community outside of making sure we constantly spend our money with them. Where are all of the African American Businesses? Now, the only business that are still predominately Black owned are the beauty shops and barber shops. However, most of the beauty supply stores and nail salons are owned by someone other than Black people.

At one time, Cleveland had so many Black business owners like Jimmy Mitchell with Boot n Shoe, Bill White with King's Men Shop, Don Weston with the Fly Shop. I could walk up to 142nd and Kinsman and see Eleanor Hayes working in her father's McDonald's. Now, we are one of the poorest cities in the country. Sorry to say, we have a high unemployment rate too.

The problem is we need to learn to fulfill our own people's needs and stop letting others come and take away our wealth. Black people are the most creative and dynamic people in the universe. But, we use our talents and gifts to enrich everyone else but ourselves. It's a thing that's been added to our culture that has to be removed.

Our parents told us to do well in school so you can get a good job.

These days having a master's degree does not mean you can get a job. Have Blacks lost that desire to own their own business? Does anyone have the dream of owning their own McDonalds like Narlie Roberts did?

Now, don't get me wrong. I know starting a new business is no easy task. Starting a new business means that a person will need to have a good strategy. This is not any different when it comes to Black owned businesses.

If a person wants to succeed as an individual, or as a member of a team, it means that there are some things they will have to do in order to succeed. This will involve things like networking with other people. This will enable one to grow, as well as connect with other people. This is instrumental in helping one to succeed.

There are so many Black people who are in different ventures across the world. These people have been able to succeed in all areas. Those who have been able to do it can attest to the fact that it is not easy and they have to struggle just like other entrepreneurs. It also means they have had to take several risks that have enabled them to get to the point they are presently in.

Every entrepreneur needs to be very friendly and also have a very good understanding of the market and the needs of their customers. One has to be dedicated to whatever they are doing and to keep a regular update on the needs of their clients.

A Black owned business is not different from the other ventures where people have to work very hard in order to reap the benefits. The entrepreneur will also need to work hard because they will be competing with other competent companies in the industry.