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Reverend Jackson Lifted All of Us Higher

By Ben Jealous

One of the great strengths of our movement is that our leaders do more than inspire young people—they keep the door open for them. The leaders who carried forward the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. understood that movements survive only when the next generation is welcomed in. Leaders like Joseph Lowery, Reverend Orange, Reverend Earl Shinnholster, Andrew Young, and many others lived that commitment.

Reverend Jesse Jackson carried it farther than most. He gave time—minutes, hours, sometimes days—to younger people trying to find their way.

When I first raised my hand to volunteer, I was fourteen. I was short for my age. I had a bad stutter. But I heard that a man who had taken risks alongside Dr. King was running for president, and I wanted to help.

I helped lead Youth for Jackson in my county. We registered voters. We believed we could change things. And while I was giving my stump speech around my county on his behalf, I decided I had

to conquer my stutter. I set my mind to it until I figured it out.

He asked to meet me when he came to speak at Stanford University. He treated young organizers like we belonged in the room.

In my early twenties, after I had been kicked out of college for organizing protests, I walked into his home in Washington, DC. He was serving as shadow senator. The topic was winning voting rights for Washington, DC—a perennial and yet always urgent battle. We talked strategy. He listened more than he spoke.

Years later, when the pressure mounted while I was leading the NAACP, he was still the person I would turn to first for advice and quiet moments. And when things got especially hot, he would just look and say: “Flood rules. Eyes open. Mouth shut. Keep stepping forward.”

In Rockford, Illinois, we drove out together because we heard that three-year-old girls who had witnessed a police shooting were losing their hair from trauma. We arrived from the funeral of a Black teenager beaten to death with two-by-fours in the streets of Chicago—some said for crossing



into the wrong territory, others because hateful people believed he was gay. Reverend Jackson went where the pain was—to help people heal, to help them find their power to move forward, and to push all of us forward again.

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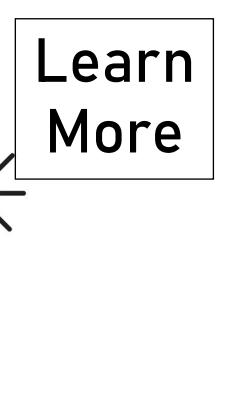
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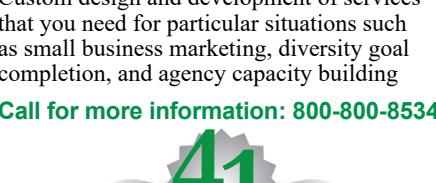
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VIRTUAL EVENTS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

2026

SBA 101: Introduction to SBA Programs Webinar

Monday, February 23, 2026, 8:00 am-9:00 am CST

Online

Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration, Rhode Island District Office

Contact: Brian Hopkins, 401-528-4575, brian.hopkins@sba.gov

Fee: Free; registration required

This free workshop, presented by the Rhode Island District Office, is designed to help entrepreneurs understand the various SBA programs and services available to help them as they start, expand, grow, and recover their businesses.

This overview presentation covers: Introduction to the SBA; SBA Resource Partner Network—Business Training and One-on-One Counseling; Selling to the Federal Government—SBA

Contracting Certification Programs: Access to Capital—Loan and Surety Bond Programs; International Trade Assistance; Emergency

Preparedness and Disaster Assistance Loans. Register online for the free workshop webinar at <https://www.sba.gov/event/77581>

Federal Contracting for Small Businesses Webinar

Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 11:00 am-12:30 pm CST

Online

Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration

Contact: Irene Gonzalez, 208-334-1673, irene.gonzalez@sba.gov

Fee: Free; registration required

Learn the essentials of federal contracting for

small businesses. This event will cover the basics of navigating the federal contracting process, as well as the various certifications available to help your small business succeed in the government marketplace. Certifications include: 8(a) Business Development Program, HUBZone Certification, Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB/EDWOSB), and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB). Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights and resources to help your small business. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/federal-contracting-basics-and-certifications-for-small-businesses-tickets-197729718828>

Federal Contracting: Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Certification Program Webinar

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm CST

Online

Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration

Contact: Patrice Dozier, patrice.dozier@sba.gov

Fee: Free; registration required

SBA is creating a space for Woman-Owned Small Businesses, via WOSB certification!

Are you a woman owner of a small business?

The federal government's goal is to award at least five percent of all federal contracting dollars to woman-owned small businesses each year. Join us for training on how to register for SBA's Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) program, which helps eligible small businesses to qualify for federal contracting opportunities.

The monthly sessions include an overview of the self-certification process, and a discussion of the NAICS codes that qualify as WOSB or

EDWOSB. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/woman-owned-small-business-wosb-certification-program-tickets-177995825761>

CERTIFICATION

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