



## REFLECTING ON ATLANTA'S HISTORIC TRADE MISSION TO COLOMBIA

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Looking back, we can proudly say that history was made when Atlanta sent its first-ever official delegation of twenty Black entrepreneurs to Cali, Colombia. This remarkable trade mission, which took place in August 2023, was a testament to the city's commitment to fostering global connections and promoting inclusivity.

Organized by the Atlanta Black Chambers in collaboration with the Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs (RICE), this mission was a unique opportunity for Atlanta-based entrepreneurs to explore new markets and engage with Afro-Colombian business owners in Cali, Colombia. The collaborative effort that made this mission possible involved RICE, the Atlanta Black Chambers, the Mayor's Office of International and Immigrant Affairs, Invest Atlanta, PROCOLOMBIA, Marca País Colombia, and Colombia's Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Tourism (Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo). The twenty entrepreneurs represented diverse industries, ranging from construction and education to manufacturing and real estate.

## Unlocking the Horizons: Illuminating Global Prospects

The primary objective of this mission was to open doors to global business opportunities and lay the groundwork for meaningful relationships with potential suppliers, manufacturers, and industry partners in Colombia.

Nick Mulkey, Ecosystems and Experience Architect at MOIIA, joined the twenty Black business owners on the mission.

"It was an honor to get to attend this trade mission alongside the many entrepreneurs," says Nick. "The Mayor's Office of International and Immigrant Affairs is focused on empowering small businesses, whether they are just starting operations in Atlanta or looking to expand. I enjoyed getting to see everyone form connections and foster plans to work alongside Colombian businesses. The city of Cali, Colombia, and Atlanta share commonalities such as being forest cities focused on sustainability, fostering rapidly growing economies, and being centers of culture. Cali's interest in equity and advancing economic mobility for all of its residents – including its large Afro-Colombian population – makes it a natural partner for Atlanta."



Nick Mulkey and Amb. Luis Gilberto Murillo,  
Ambassador of Colombia to the U.S.

The trade mission was a dynamic blend of meet-and-greets with influential figures, visits to local companies, discussions at universities and research centers, and cultural experiences like a vibrant salsa dance show. Colombia's Ambassador to the United States, Luis Gilberto Murillo, participated in many of the activities, and led a personal tour of his hometown.

During this trade mission, 145 connections were formed between Atlanta and Colombian-based product and service businesses. In order to ensure long-term partnerships remain strong, the Atlanta entrepreneurs will receive valuable business development insights, follow up, and support in the forms of financial, legal, language translation, and execution of strategic plans.

As we look back on this historic journey, we can appreciate the immense potential that lies in forging global connections and promoting entrepreneurship among underrepresented communities. Atlanta's commitment to inclusion and collaboration was vividly demonstrated through this trade mission, and it serves as an inspiration for future endeavors.

In conclusion, Atlanta's trade mission to Colombia was a groundbreaking initiative that opened doors, created opportunities, and showcased the city's dedication to global engagement. It was a journey that left a lasting impact on the participating entrepreneurs, the communities they represent, and the city of Atlanta as a whole.



Atlanta and Cali-based businesses connect to discuss collaboration



Nick Mulkey and 2022 International Women of Courage Awardee Josefina Klinger Zuniga



Participants attend RAP Pacifico's Business Expo