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ESSAY

BY CHARLES U. YOUNG II

Where are black-owned businesses?

African-American entrepreneurs need to step up their game in Sacramento



Charles U. Young II is self-employed and lives in Sacramento.

Sacramento is a great small city to live in. It's not congested like other cities I've lived in, such as New York and Los Angeles. But I'm concerned about the lack of black-owned businesses in Sacramento.

Don't get me wrong, there are a lot of African-Americans who have businesses, including corner stores, restaurants and funeral homes. And there are those African Americans who choose to work from home.

But as I look around Sacramento, there are a lot of businesses that African Americans do not own, such as dental offices, construction companies, motels or wireless firms. It seems as though we are on the short end of the stick when it comes to owning businesses besides barber shops, hair salons, soul food restaurants and funeral homes.

For example, I was between jobs and I needed a lot of money fast. So I applied at car dealerships and independent car lots. Not one was owned or run by an African American. I'm not saying that other ethnic groups shouldn't own businesses as well.

But I am concerned about the lack of black entrepreneurs in a state like California, where African Americans should

have a higher chance of owning a business than anywhere else.

Some experts say it is a lack of education that keeps African Americans from achieving success. But I believe it is a lack of knowledge and vision that doesn't motivate people to take pride in working for themselves.

For example, when I lived in Charlotte, N.C., I worked for a company called Rent-A-Center for five years before moving back to California. I

had an African-American manager who had the gift for perfection. I watched him refurbish appliances picked up from non-paying customers and make them look new. I told him he should work for himself, and now he contracts throughout the area.

In 2019, we have access to a lot of information. But it seems that some of us are only

concerned about making money by rapping, singing or producing hits.

As African Americans, we must understand that we have something to offer the city and society. There is something we can do to perfection that no one else can, and that can open up doors to success. It's up to us to bring it out. □

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