



Entrepreneurs, small

business owners and diverse voices from around the region came together Sept. 7 to showcase the power of diversity, innovation and collaboration in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The 2023 Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit (IES) Regional and Multicultural Open House attracted more than 200 participants and included workshops, a panel discussion and a pitch competition.

"We are immensely grateful to all the venues, organizations, entrepreneurs, small business owners and the QC community for your fantastic support and active involvement," said Loredana Cooper, event co-director and multicultural entrepreneurial advisor at Black Hawk College.

"Your contributions - whether through sponsorship, hosting or participation - were essential in creating an environment conducive to collaboration, learning and networking," she said.



Twelve entrepreneurs applied for the 2023 Pitch Competition. Congratulations to the winners:

- 1st Place (\$1,000) - Erika Ubeda of Eli's Empanadas
- 2nd Place (\$800) - Jasmine Rizo of Dulzara Carry + Studio
- 3rd Place (\$500) - Shalonda Glenn of MexicanSoul

Thank you to the event speakers and supporters:

- Ewelina Bergert - Black Hawk College, assistant professor of business
- Brett Carter - The Jacobson Group, managing director
- Chris Caves - Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce, vice president, business & economic growth
- Igor Cavlovic - Two Rivers Bank and Trust, branch manager
- Jack Chimbetete - Jack's Shack International LLC, CEO
- Harry Coin - SCORE Quad Cities mentor
- Maurice Davis - Marketing Growth Strategy
- James Greenwood - Greenwood Law, attorney
- Terra Huyten - CoWork QC, managing director/creative operations
- Dr. Amy Maxeiner - Black Hawk College, vice president for instruction and student services
- Victor Oyervides - America's SBDC Iowa State Office, minority business counselor
- Rachel Pitchford - Life Advisors, chief strategy officer

- Sangeetha Rayapati - City of Moline, mayor
- Ying Sa - Community CPA & Associates, CEO & managing partner
- Mitch Thomas - MRA, executive director Western Illinois & Iowa
- Mike Thoms - City of Rock Island, mayor
- Tom Trone - SCORE Quad Cities certified mentor
- Dr. LaDrina Wilson - Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce, CEO
- Mary Zimmerman - Iowa Department of Transportation Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Supportive Services Program manager/government contracting specialist



The Black Hawk College Multicultural Entrepreneurial Center partnered with the Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit (IES) to host the event.

Thank you to the event sponsors:

- Ascentra Credit Union
- Black Hawk College Multicultural Entrepreneurial Center
- Community CPA & Associates and IES - Catherine Tran, event co-director
- IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union
- SCORE Quad Cities
- WVIK, Quad Cities NPR

[View photos from the event.](#)

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