

Building and maintaining the franchising ecosystem in Dallas

Why Dallas is a global leader in franchising and economic inclusiveness.

Williams Chicken CEO and founder Hiawatha Williams outside a store location on Marvin D. Love Freeway at Red Bird. A large part of Williams' success is attributable to the decision made by Williams and Tim Williams, its chief franchise officer, to create a franchising program in 1995 to scale the company, writes Carlos White. ((Smiley N. Pool / Staff Photographer))

By Carlos White
1:30 AM on Sep 6, 2023



Few understand the power of franchising. It is a proven business and distribution model that transcends demographics and industries. If properly implemented, it can create more sustainable and profitable companies and provide opportunities for ancillary businesses that serve the needs of franchise systems.

In fact, one of the most successful case studies began right here in Dallas. Williams Chicken is a southern Dallas-based company that was founded in 1987 by its legendary CEO, Hiawatha Williams. A large part of Williams' success is attributable to the decision made by Hiawatha Williams and Tim Williams, its chief franchise officer, to create a franchising program in 1995 to scale the company. Williams today has more than 35 units, more than \$20 million in revenue, and over 500 employees within their franchise system, based on their audited financial statements and legally mandated franchise disclosure document and records.

A year ago, Mayor Eric L. Johnson launched the [Mayor's Franchise Initiative](#) to increase business franchising in Dallas, particularly in historically underserved and overlooked communities.

This first-of-its-kind initiative has positioned Dallas as a preeminent franchising hub and a thought-leader for creating, incubating, and scaling emerging businesses, irrespective of their size or ZIP code.



Opinion

Get smart opinions on the topics North Texans care about.

EMAIL ADDRESS

By signing up you agree to our [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

Johnson rightly recognized that, as more entrepreneurs in Dallas are educated about the franchising model, the more likely they are to scale their businesses and create additional job and economic development opportunities in our city.

I am happy to report that in its first year of operation, the Mayor's Franchise Initiative has proved just this — and more.

In just one year, an advisory board of experienced, southern Dallas-centric candidates identified to help lead and support the effort — including Tim Williams — have created a sustainable infrastructure and scalable platform to equip entrepreneurs with the requisite informational, social and financial capital to help them grow their businesses. Through the initiative, we have:

ADVERTISEMENT

-
- Provided opportunities for entrepreneurs to learn successful operational, marketing and legal strategies from vetted and verifiable executives and entrepreneurs.
 - Informed entrepreneurs about the Employee Retention Tax Credits program and connected them with tax professionals to help them file for over \$1.5 million in overlooked tax credits that are being used now to reinvest in or grow their businesses.
 - Partnered with community development financial institution AltCap to develop signature lending and alternative options for entrepreneurs, securing up to \$250,000 in debt financing and \$1 million in revenue or equity-based financing for entrepreneurs.

- Enlisted a supply chain expert to develop a “snap-on” supply chain option to help small restaurateurs reduce their operating and inventory costs.

In addition, Neighborly, the world’s largest home service franchisor, and the Texas Restaurant Association, the nation’s largest restaurant association, have pledged their support. Moving forward, the initiative will continue to partner with thought leaders to develop general and industry-specific programming and marketing strategies to accelerate its impact and solidify Dallas as a global leader in franchising.

With the leadership and talent that we have in the Mayor’s Franchise Initiative will really push the needle in scaling businesses locally, regionally and nationally.

Carlos White serves as franchise impact ambassador for Mayor Eric Johnson in Dallas. White is currently a partner at the law firm of Lathrop GPM. He wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News.

ADVERTISEMENT