



## **NGLCC and USBLN® Sign Historic Memo of Understanding**

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WASHINGTON, DC (July 19, 2010) – With the approaching July 26th, 2010, 20 year Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act as the backdrop, the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce® (NGLCC), the national certifying organization for LGBT-owned businesses, and the US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN), the national certifying body for disability-owned businesses, are proud to announce a collaborative partnership designed to advance business opportunities for LGBT business owners, as well as, business owners with disabilities.

On Friday, July 9th, 2010, NGLCC Co-Founder and President, Justin Nelson, and NGLCC Co-Founder and CEO, Chance Mitchell, met with USBLN® Executive Director and General Counsel, John D. Kemp, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU recognizes the common interests of both organizations to cooperatively pursue activities that enhance the business opportunities, professional development and career advancement of LGBT business owners, as well as, those of business owners with disabilities.

The main focus of the agreement is on business certification; where the NGLCC will promote the USBLN® Disability-Owned Business Enterprise Certification to LGBT business owners with a disability and the USBLN® will promote NGLCC certification to business owners with a disability that are also LGBT.

"There are more than 50 million Americans living with a disability, of which as many as three million are LGBT," said Nelson. "This partnership is yet another way that we can seek out and serve LGBT business owners and we look forward to partnering with the USBLN® to do just that."

"The USBLN® is deeply indebted and most grateful to the NGLCC, and especially Justin and Chance, for their outstanding support and guidance in the development of our disability-owned business certification program," said Kemp. "For everyone to participate in the economic mainstream of America, our certification programs provide great hope and real economic opportunity to the millions of entrepreneurs with disabilities who are also members of the LGBT community. We are all brothers and sisters in our battle for humanity."

In 2008 the NGLCC joined with the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), the national certifying body for women-owned businesses, to advise USBLN® on the organization's development of a certification for disability owned businesses. "We remember being the new kids on the certification block not so many years ago and WBENC was not only gracious, but extremely helpful in development of our certification," said Mitchell. "We were honored to team with WBENC to help our friends at the USBLN® and we look forward to a mutually beneficial partnership."

In addition to the certification component, the organizations have pledged to inform their respective members about one another and the partnership, as well as, to identify co-venture opportunities, share programming, cross market, and participate in one another's annual conferences and signature events.

#### **About NGLCC**

The NGLCC is the business advocate and direct link between LGBT business owners, corporations and government. The NGLCC represents the interests of more than 1.4 million LGBT-owned businesses in the United States and is the umbrella organization for 61 state, local and international LGBT chambers of commerce and business organizations. [www.nglcc.org](http://www.nglcc.org).

#### **About the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN®)**

The US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®) is the national disability organization that serves as the collective voice of over 60 Business Leadership Network affiliates across North America, representing over 5,000 employers. The USBLN® promotes the business imperative of the preparation and inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace, marketplace, and supply chain while supporting the development and expansion of its BLN affiliates. The USBLN® recognizes and supports best practices in hiring and advancing employees with disabilities, marketing to consumers with disabilities, and encourages contracting with vendors with disabilities through the development and certification of disability-owned businesses. [www.usbln.org](http://www.usbln.org)

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