

## Business Highlight – Micro-Easy Vocational Institute

*Kola Onafowode is the founder and CEO of Micro-Easy Vocational Institute in San Pablo. In this Business Highlight, he explains how the WDBCCC helps him to help others.*



### **What goods/services does your business sell?**

Micro-Easy Computer Enterprises, Inc., provides information communications technology (ICT) training and information technology consulting and services. We also provide job placement assistance for our students and graduates.

### **How long has your business been open, and what prompted you to open it?**

Micro-Easy Computer Enterprises opened in 1985, providing computer sales, repair, and training. Over time, I saw a digital divide among minorities in the surrounding communities and decided to fill the need.

In 2000, Micro-Easy was incorporated and established a state-approved school, Micro-Easy Vocational Institute. Our ICT courses help a diversified population from beginning through advanced levels with certificates and CompTIA industry certifications, depending on the course. Since 2000, Micro-Easy has empowered a diverse population of students with computer skills to help them acquire in-demand jobs and has even incorporated suggestions from local employers to update our curriculum, an invaluable resource for job placement. In addition, Micro-Easy has addressed the socio-economic divide among minorities by partnering with Rubicon, Richmond Works, Reentry Success Center, San Pablo Economic Development Corporation, etc. Third-party payers fund tuition for ninety percent of our students. In turn, our alumni often help students and new graduates, the impact of which is immeasurable.

### **What are the biggest challenges your business is facing right now, and how are you working to overcome them?**

The biggest challenges we're facing right now include:

- Hiring additional staff and faculty to expand our workforce training program statewide
- Providing paid internship opportunities for our students by contacting local businesses, alumni, and temp agencies. In addition, launching an IT apprenticeship program with local high schools and junior colleges.

### **How has your business engaged with the WDBCCC, and how has that engagement helped?**

Over the years, WDBCCC has provided workshops expertly coordinated by Patience Ofodu. As a result, it empowered Micro-Easy to help more minorities and hire more staff. Also, Mr. Charles Brown introduced me to key contact organizations that we've collaborated with on mutually beneficial projects. From the WDBCCC, we receive many referrals of WIOA-eligible candidates who cannot afford school tuition, mainly minorities re-entering the workforce or seeking a career change.