

# Business in Black: Dominique Harris, founder of Truly Sincere Properties

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*NJ Urban News had the pleasure of speaking with Newark, NJ-based entrepreneurs, Dominique Harris and [Jazmin Norman](#), who are recipients of The Coalition to Back Black Businesses Grant (CBBB). Launched in the Fall of 2020, this multi-year grantmaking and training initiative founded by American Express and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, in alliance with the nation's leading Black business associations, seeks to assist qualifying Black-owned businesses in post-Covid-19 pandemic recovery and charting a path forward by providing long-lasting mentorship and online resources. CBBB has awarded \$1.62M in grants (\$5,000 each) to 324 Black small business owners across 34 states. We wanted to chat with the ladies about how the grant has made a difference in ensuring their business's longevity and continued success in a two-part series.*

For Dominique Harris, being an advocate and local provider for affordable housing in underserved communities was always her calling.

At Truly Sincere Properties LLC, she seeks to bring affordability back to long-term and short-term rentals, creating a positive climate where people can meet their payments on the 1st of the month and book inexpensive vacation accommodations.

Genuinely offering compassion, access, and opportunities to disproportionately affected neighborhoods is Harris's top priority. Launched in 2020, the Newark, New Jersey native founded Truly Sincere Properties to serve people, while highlighting the growing

need to address the housing crisis in many areas, especially low-income ones.

“I see it in my neighborhood,” said Harris. “A lot of people can’t afford rent now, a lot of people work two jobs in order just to afford the rent, so I see a lot of people being displaced because they’re being pushed out because the rent prices are going up.”

Harris hopes that through respectability, honesty, transparency, and simply giving back and paying it forward, she’ll make a difference in alleviating the financial burdens associated with housing, while simultaneously combating gentrification.

She already has big dreams and goals for her Newark-based business, with ambitions to expand and purchase real estate, specifically in Newark and surrounding urban districts.

Besides having a passion and love for real estate, Harris also credits her inspiration to start her business to her caseworker origins.

“I work with mentally-ill, homeless individuals, and a lot of the problem is that they can’t find affordable housing,” she said. “They want to get back into society and be productive, but they always have trouble getting the housing component because the only amount they’re getting from Social Security is \$800 or \$900. There’s a need for affordable housing to come back.”

Eventually, Harris wants to develop properties beyond the tri-state area and have a larger impact. She said one of the highlights of her business journey has been finding out about the \$5,000 Coalition to Back Black Businesses (CBBB) Grant at an American Express event, where she networked with fellow entrepreneurs, discovered new information and resources and later, won money, which was instrumental in helping her purchase her first piece of land in Interlachen, Florida.

“When I found out about [the grant]... I was skeptical about it at first, but the guy was like, ‘no, we really offer help and we really offer the grant money,’ so when I did apply back then, you know there’s a waiting period, and you didn’t hear anything so you’re thinking, ‘oh, nothing happened,’ but they contacted me and said ‘you’re one of the winners,’” recalled Harris.

Purchasing land was always a dream of Harris’, and she knew right away that she was going to use the grant funds toward property ownership.

She plans on building a container home on the land. A container home is a shipping cargo container from the port refurbished into a home. These unique structures are more cost-efficient than building a house from the ground up and are environmentally friendly.

“[The container home] is something that can be made beautiful and it’s different, so that grant money helped me start purchasing a piece of my land,” said Harris. “When I went to go see my land for the first time, that was a memorable and very humbling experience; it’s something I can work with.”

At Truly Sincere Properties, Harris’ slogan is “always a sincere experience,” deriving her business name from her son, Sincere. Her prerogatives include using her company to help prospective renters tackle the housing market in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“The aftermarket is very tough because now you have landlords that don’t want to rent to people because a lot of people got away with not paying any rent for a certain amount of time, so you’re going to have to reintroduce a system where the landlord has to be comfortable and trusting of the tenant now,” Harris said. “A lot of people suffered from Covid, a lot of people lost their jobs, so it was on both ends of the spectrum.”

“I want my legacy to be generational wealth for my children and that you got provided with wonderful customer service and a great experience,” she said.