



The Association for Wholesaling Diversity (AWD)

2025 9th Annual National Conference | June 17-20 | [Hyatt Houston Baytown](#)

(Black Women Wholesaler Retreat | Sponsor Symposium | Member Assembly | [Hybrid Career Fair](#))

The AWD Annual National Conference has been held each summer since our 2016 inception, except during COVID. An AWD member is defined as any black professional currently working in wholesaling, key accounts, or advanced sales roles at financial services firms globally. AWD members span all firms, regions, channels and financial services lines of business (including asset management, insurance, DCIO, annuities, alternatives, etc.). As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, AWD's mission includes four elements: building and strengthening the **community** of members, improving and **developing** our members' wholesaling craft, helping our members **advance** their careers, and **recruiting** more black talent into the financial services wholesaling career path.

The AWD Annual National Conference aligns with these four elements. **Community:** We gather all black wholesalers from across the continent and across the industry, once per year. AWD hosts the only professional event dedicated exclusively to the craft of wholesaling where the plurality of attendees, speakers, leaders and voices are black. This unique event has resulted in myriad, concrete mental health benefits for member attendees—as reported by members and their employers. For several days, code-switching, fear, unconscious bias, microaggressions, and other ubiquitous challenges faced by our community are refreshingly turned off. In their place, attendees find enthusiastic encouragement, robust celebration of excellence, and intense focus on the continuous improvement of one's craft. The AWD Annual National Conference is an event employers should actively encourage their black wholesaling, key accounts and advanced sales employees to attend. When employees know they are a part of a community that supports them explicitly—and that their firm supports community—retention and job satisfaction for those employees improve.

Development: The AWD Annual National Conference agenda is singularly designed to improve our members' wholesaling craft. All content is necessarily product neutral and firm neutral. For three days, members connect with mentors and mentees, build and strengthen their professional networks & demonstrate and sharpen their wholesaling

skills. This laser focus on development delivers myriad, concrete professional benefits. Each annual conference to date has resulted in multiple members earning promotions, which they attribute fully to their attendance at the conference.

Advancement: Helping members develop their craft directly aids in their career advancement. Creating and nurturing a true 'safe space' community also aids in career advancement, in part due to members' increased confidence, broader network, ready access to a broad array of complimentary resources, and heightened retention. Advancement is also aided by our stated and intentional focus on it. AWD encourages, motivates and inspires its members always, but especially during our national conference. Better financial and career outcomes always result.

Recruiting: AWD hosts a Job Fair / Career Expo on the final day of each year's national conference, which invites students and job seekers to directly engage with our sponsor employers, in person or online. Members also interact with job seekers and students throughout the expo. For career expo attendees, the visual abundance of successful black professionals enables black job seekers to visualize themselves being successful as a financial services wholesaler. It is critical for any job seeker to be able to see themselves succeeding in the role. Black job seekers often have difficulty visualizing their success in settings where people who look like them are rare or absent.

The business case for AWD Members attending the conference, and employers approving and encouraging their AWD Member employees' attendance, cannot be overstated. Corporate employee resource groups do not focus on one career path exclusively and rarely provide settings with only black professionals in attendance. As ambassadors of their firm, AWD Members are driven to 'show up and show out,' by demonstrating their acumen, improving their skills, and helping others improve their skills. There is no better 'commercial' for a firm than their exceptional black wholesalers demonstrating, improving, and sharing their excellence.

AWD asks all financial services firms employing black wholesaling, key accounts, or advanced sales professionals to approve their employees' attendance and ensure that conference-related travel expenses are treated the same as those related to any other financial services industry conference. Unlike many conferences, upon their return to the office, AWD Members are often encouraged to share with management and others what they learned, other ways they benefited, and who they met at the conference. AWD and our members welcome this. Please use what you glean from that sharing as a basis to partner or continue partnering with us going forward. Thank you! [Marlön Hall](#) | [AWD](#)