

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

CLIENT PARTNER SPOTLIGHT – RANDY TUCKER

As our interview gets underway, Randy Tucker pauses for a moment in reflection. The pause is notable, in part because of the words that follow. He explains, almost with a sense of wonder, that he has been home for 23 years—the exact amount of time he spent incarcerated. During our conversation, it’s abundantly clear that he embraces every moment.

Randy’s imprisonment began in Angola in 1980, when he was a very young man. Slightly more than a decade into his incarceration, Randy made a decision that would shape the rest of his life: he began studying the law.

A unique course was being offered behind the wall that allowed individuals to pursue formal legal education. Ultimately, that experience led to graduation and earned Randy important credentials that allowed him to work as a paralegal and advocate. Even before his release, he used his knowledge to help others, contributing to nearly a dozen cases that led to reduced sentences for fellow incarcerated people who had been unjustly convicted or overlooked by the system.

When Randy finally returned home in 2003, he carried this commitment forward, building a career centered on service and second chances. For the first five years, he served as a paralegal with an attorney with whom he had formed a strong professional relationship. Shortly thereafter, he started his own freelance business where he continued to give voice to the voiceless.

Support from The Fountain Fund came years later, when Randy hit a rough patch after his truck broke down. The First 72+, a partner agency which offers an array of wrap-around reentry services, encouraged Randy to reach out. He recalls, “It’s hard to not have funds and then have a broken vehicle when you need to work. ... Your team treated me with dignity. And I’m really appreciative of that. Especially Meagan. She always met me with kindness.”

The biggest advice Randy would give to someone who’s coming home: “If it’s possible, try to work for yourself, start a business. That way you don’t have to deal with the ills of society that are placed on you. ...If you become an employer, hire somebody that’s an ex-offender and then show them humility and respect.”



Randy loves spending time with friends and family.

Randy maintains gratitude by keeping his attention on what is still good, still possible, and still worth noticing. Gratitude, for Randy, is not denial of hardship; it’s a deliberate decision to recognize dignity—in himself and in the people who meet him with kindness—and to let that recognition be an anchor.

Today, Randy is confronting an aggressive form of stage four cancer, and yet he continues to approach life focused on what is truly meaningful: family, laughter, work, friends, and even the simple joys like sharing peanut butter with his dog in the middle of the night!

As he shares these thoughts, the beautiful sound of his 6-year-old grandchild playing in the background fills the air. And then he says, “So I come to the end of each day with a heart that feels full of blessings. ... I have a house. I have a loving family. This life has been really good.”



Shares Randy, “You know, I don’t know what I did in this life to deserve it, but God has really, really blessed me.”

Our Mission

The Fountain Fund increases economic opportunities for formerly incarcerated people to improve their lives and remain in their communities.

SECURING A BUSINESS LOAN: ATTRIBUTES THAT SIGNAL SUCCESS

At The Fountain Fund, our goal is to do everything possible to help Client Partners set themselves up for success. This is especially true for individuals interested in securing a business loan, as these loans are the most demanding and rigorous in our lending portfolio.

Our business loan readiness packet is a supportive, step-by-step guide that helps Client Partners turn ideas into a clear plan by breaking the process into manageable pieces. Along the way, individuals learn how to develop a comprehensive business plan - from executive summary through operations, market analysis, sales strategy, and concluding with financial projections using a cash-flow template. Business ideas are then tested for viability and sustainability!

Are you interested in applying for a business loan? If so, please email **Stephanie Conteh, Business Loan Administrator**, at sconteh@fountainfund.org to register for an upcoming virtual meeting. During these meetings, Stephanie outlines the loan process including intake, underwriting, and committee review, and provides details for three loan sizes—small, medium, and large—with specific eligibility and documentation requirements. We hope these meetings will create an engaging and informal opportunity for prospective borrowers and current Client Partners to ask questions about ways in which they can strengthen and/or launch a new business. These meetings also provide an overview of our agency’s mission-driven approach to removing barriers to credit for the previously incarcerated.

FOUNTAIN FUND TO PRESENT AT NATIONAL CREDIT BUILDERS ALLIANCE SUMMIT

The Fountain Fund is excited to present at the national **Credit Builders Alliance Summit** this June! Through a dynamic, facilitated conversation, our lending leaders Shantel Hopkins (Director of Lending), Sankofa Alkebu-Lan (Loan Operations Specialist), and Jeffrey Beacham (Loan Assets Specialist) will explore how credit can serve as a tool for elevation for the formerly incarcerated. The session will examine how lending systems can honor dignity while still meeting expectations around risk, sustainability, and performance, ultimately helping individuals move beyond barriers toward a future that is “cleared for takeoff.”



Sankofa Alkebu-Lan (left), Jeff Beacham (right), and Shantel Hopkins are excited to share their hard-earned wisdom at this year’s CBA Summit taking place June 10-12, 2026, in Arlington, Virginia.



Facilitated by Shantel in a fireside chat format, the conversation will go beyond theory to offer a transparent, real-world view of how credit building can lead to economic growth and financial stability for vulnerable populations. The session will highlight the vital importance of turning a systemic “No” into a life-changing “Yes.”

CREDIT BUILDING BRINGS A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

Client Partner Christopher Green increased his credit score from 485 to 720+ with help from a Fountain Fund loan. Consistent payments and reduced debt strengthened his credit profile and made homeownership possible, allowing him to secure a 6% mortgage interest rate through a traditional bank on his family’s first home.

When Christopher finally held the keys to his new three-room bedroom rancher in hand, he told his children, “*This is your house.*” He told his grandchildren, “*You can go to school and tell them your pop-pop bought a house for you.*” Generational wealth brightens the future... for future generations. Congratulations, Christopher.



CONTACT US IN NEW ORLEANS



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As of February 28, 2026, New Orleans’s total lending included 102 loans valued at \$255,140!

EXAMPLES OF LOANS

- Business Equipment
- Secure Housing
- Obtain a Driver’s License
- Vehicle Repair
- Tuition
- Court Fines & Fees



Scan to learn more!