

Jamal

Prince George's County



Jamal knew he was not a 9 to 5 type of guy. This sentiment, coupled with a strong entrepreneurial spirit, led Jamal, who had been working as an electrician, to start his own sound production studio. Breasia Studios, in Laurel, Maryland, began in 2005 under the vision of Jamal and his fiancé Nailah. Although Jamal became interested in sound production after working as an electrician on movie sets, he ultimately became a business owner because he wanted to create a product that was “for the people.”

Jamal’s business is completely driven by his faith, and therefore everything that is produced by Breasia Studios is a testament to the beliefs that allowed him to become a small business owner. That is not to say that Jamal has relied on his faith alone. “Blood, sweat and tears have been put into [his business],” Jamal says. In the beginning, Breasia Studios was based out of his mother’s basement, where Jamal stored his equipment. As the studio grew, Jamal was forced to find a space that accommodated his equipment, as well as the employees who were becoming a regular and necessary part of the business. Breasia Studios moved from Baltimore to Laurel in order to accommodate the growing business and to satisfy the numerous clients based in Washington, D.C.

Although Breasia Studios was gaining recognition, and Jamal was able to hire one part-time and four full-time employees, there was still one major obstacle to overcome—health care. As a new business owner, Jamal knew he could not afford to provide health care to his employees. In fact, he had not even had health care since he was in his 20s. Jamal did the best he could to counteract the lack of health care by giving his employees safety training courses, and assisting with the heavy lifting. Jamal decided that if anyone was going to get hurt, it should be him because he could not risk losing an employee to an on-the-job injury. Jamal knew this was a problem.

Luckily, Jamal discovered that, thanks to the Governor's Working Families and Small Business Health Coverage Act of 2007, he was eligible for a small business grant that helped make health care for him and his employees affordable. Jamal said the enrollment process was easy due to a helpful insurance broker who was knowledgeable and passionate. As a business owner, Jamal wanted to know the bottom line—what the insurance would cover and how much it would cost. He was very satisfied with the information that he learned about the grant.

It was an emotional moment for Jamal when he realized that he would have health insurance for the first time in years. Not only would he be able to get regular checkups without worrying about the cost, but his business could expand now that his employees would be covered. Owning a small business is like being part of another family, which Jamal calls “the Breasia family,” and having health care makes this family more secure. On receiving health care Jamal said, “It is great to know that there is a resource available—word needs to get out.”

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