



“I came up with the idea to do a hot dog shop while running bread routes.

I would see all these other businesses that I delivered to just selling tons of hot dogs. It made me think, why couldn't I do a place that specializes in hot dogs? My mom knows how to cook and had always wanted a restaurant and I wanted to be able to do something that allowed me to stop doing so many other jobs. My family is from New York, so I knew if we could offer those New York-style street dogs with our homemade red sauce and homemade chili, it would work. I knew it would take off.

The hardest part for me was getting started. It just felt like there were so many obstacles against me and as a young man, and as a Black man, it was really hard to get people

to take me seriously. I eventually just had to take a leap of faith. So I took \$5,000 of my own money, got our first location at a gas station in East Florence, and bought all the equipment.

The first year we were open we took a loss, but the second year we broke even. Most businesses don't break even that fast, so I knew we had to be doing something right. The third year we were open we were told by our landlord that we needed to move, but even with that we still made a profit.

Now that we are finally in our new location, I can't wait to fully open. We designed this space to have an open concept where you can see us as we cook and so we could talk to people. I like to talk and I want to be able to ask customers how they are doing and what's going on with their day. It's a little thing, but it helps us build those relationships with our customers.

We also want to get Dash-N-Dogz involved in the community. I want to do can drives and bookbag drives and sponsor kids' sports teams...anything we can do that will help build up our community. I also want to employ the youth. I want to give them a good foundation and provide a good example that could help change their trajectory.

I don't want to say I would be a role model for them, but I do want to be someone that the youth can point to and say 'He did it. And if he can do it, I can do it too.'”

- **Terrell Mack, owner and cook of Dash-N-Dogz**