

**NEWS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

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### **Inclusive Communities celebrates the graduation of LeadDIVERSITY Cohort Three**

OMAHA, Neb. (June 10, 2022) – Inclusive Communities is delighted to announce the graduation of its third cohort of LeadDIVERSITY Advocates. The graduation ceremony for the 29 Advocates takes place today at 2 pm at The Benson Theater. LeadDIVERSITY is a leadership training and networking program presented by Inclusive Communities since 2019, for professionals in the Midwest region. It launched in partnership with the Omaha Public Power District (OPPD), The Greater Omaha Chamber, and the Business Ethics Alliance.

Inclusive Communities Executive Director Cammy Watkins said, “We launched LeadDIVERSITY in Omaha, modeled after our Northeast Ohio affiliate’s program, because we wanted to support building collective impact around the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community. You can achieve so much more when you bring people together consistently over time and guide them on what leveraging their power to create more inclusive spaces looks like.” Cohort One began in-person in August 2019 but moved to a completely virtual experience in March 2020 due to the pandemic. Cohort Two retained the virtual format for its entirety. Cohort Three, therefore, is the first class to receive the full in-person experience for this program. It will also be the first in-person graduation ceremony since the program’s launch.

The organization has opted to invite all three Cohorts for this celebration which will bring together almost 90 professionals who are dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their professional spaces. Inclusive Communities Programs and Curriculum Manager, Kandace Freeman said, “We are seeing a real need for workplaces to reorient their conversations and cultures of inclusion so that they can retain skilled talent. The people and organizations that engage in LeadDIVERSITY are taking those intentional steps towards creating professional spaces that honor diverse identities, and that’s helping their companies become better at problem solving, at employee retention, and at overall productivity.”

LeadDIVERSITY is accepting applications for its next cohort until June 17, 2022. As the program moves into its fourth year, it continues in partnership with OPPD, the Greater Omaha Chamber, and the Tri-Faith Initiative. Anyone interested in applying can [click here](#).

#### **Inclusive Communities celebrates LeadDIVERSITY Cohort Three:**

Daryl Anderson, *Clark Creative Group*  
Cody Brookhouser-Sisney, *McGrath, North Mullin & Kratz PC LLO*  
Cruz Cabrera, *Omaha Children's Museum*  
Shari Collins, *Methodist Health System*  
Ana Diaz-Orozco, *Office of Latino/Latin American Studies, University of Nebraska at Omaha*  
Alexis Dickerson, *NE Medicine/Omaha Integrative Care*  
Julie Dierberger, *University of Nebraska at Omaha*  
Lauren Foster, *Greater Fremont Development Council*  
Ireydisa Gomez-Hall, *Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative*

Wendy Hamilton, *Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska*  
Janique Hayes, *Creighton University*  
Andrea Haynes, *Westside Community Schools*  
Gina Langel, *Metropolitan Utilities District*  
Tess Larson, *The Sherwood Foundation*  
Scott Lloyd, *Miso*  
Vanessa Martinez-Hernandez, *Heartland Workforce Solutions*  
Collette Nero, *Omaha Public Schools*  
Caitlin Osborn, *Amplify Arts*  
Ericka Payton, *Westside Community Schools- West Campus*  
DerNecia Phillips, *Nelson Mandela Elementary*  
Jamie Reyes, *Nebraska Public Service Commission*  
Connie Schaffer, *University of Nebraska at Omaha*  
Debra Shaw, *Partnership 4 Kids*  
Justina Struck, *Koley Jessen, P.C., L.L.O.*  
Christopher Tooley, *Anaplan*  
Leah Whitney Chavez, *World Speaks*  
Chaplain Crystall Williams, *Nebraska Methodist Hospital*  
Melissa Wurth, *Omaha Girls Rock*  
Wissam Zeineddine, *Midwest Maintenance Co., Inc*