



*Maggie Wood*  
*Executive Director*

For Immediate Release

Contact: Maggie Wood, Executive Director  
[Maggie@inclusive-communities.org](mailto:Maggie@inclusive-communities.org)  
(402) 871-9935

## **Inclusive Communities Announces New Cohort of LeadDIVERSITY Advocates**

**July 15, 2020 (Omaha, NE)** – Inclusive Communities is proud to announce the 2020/21 class of LeadDIVERSITY advocates. LeadDIVERSITY is an exciting year-long leadership program centered around creating organizational opportunities and conversations surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion.

In partnership with the Omaha Public Power District, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Ethics Alliance, Inclusive Communities will launch this second LeadDIVERSITY cohort in September. Due to COVID-19 elements of this program will be facilitated online. It will provide leaders with a platform to engage in topics that will leave them well-versed and experienced in anticipating diversity and inclusion needs in the workplace as well as the community.

The first LeadDIVERSITY program was announced at Inclusive Communities' Humanitarian Brunch in April 2019. For that inaugural cohort there were 25 Advocates who have now graduated and are effecting changes in the organizational culture at their respective workplaces and within their communities.

This second cohort was chosen from a total of 81 applicants. The 36 Advocates selected, comprise an inclusive sample of Omaha's diverse community representing every racial identity. Of the participants, 64% identify as BIPOC. In addition, 65% of participants identify as female, while 35% identify as male and 4 self-identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. The cohort is a mix of various industries including corporate, nonprofit, public sector/government, education, healthcare, and the service industry.

Tena Hahn Rodriguez, Business Development Manager at Inclusive Communities who will be leading the program this year said, "The response to our call for enrollment was wonderful, and it was truly a challenge to select only these candidates. We are excited to begin this journey with them; as they grow as leaders, they will become the key bearers of inclusive and equitable culture and practice in their organizations and on a larger scale. We recognize that this work we do must happen at all levels and in all sectors of society, and we feel that this cohort is best poised to create widespread positive change."



**We are proud to introduce our 2020-2021 LeadDIVERSITY Advocates:**

Donna Aman, Executive Director, *Outlook Enrichment*

Christina Arellano, Inclusion and Diversity Experience Ambassador, *Signature Performance Inc.*

Kimberly C. Barnes, Omaha Healthy Start Program Manager, *Charles Drew Health Center*

Deana Blount, Site Director, *Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands*

Damien Coran, Program and Curriculum Supervisor, *Partnership 4 Kids*

Sarah Ericson, Director of Organizational Effectiveness, *Mosaic*

Eric Ewing, Executive Director, *Great Plains Black History Museum*

Alexander Foreman, Credit Analyst & ERG Leader

Rebecca Forsyth, Creative Director/Master Stylist, *Bungalow 8 Hairdressing*

Wendy Goldberg, Executive Director, *Tri-Faith Initiative*

Cynthia Gooch-Grayson, Associate Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, *Metropolitan Community College*

Denise Hall, Member, *Delta Sigma Theta*

Steve Hogan, Attorney, *Fraser Stryker PC LLO*

Liz Kendall Weisser, Education and Community Engagement Manager, *Omaha Symphony*

Tracy Leavelle, Director of the Kingfisher Institute for the Liberal Arts and Professions, *Creighton University*

Kat Lopez, Director of Communications and Events, *Centro Hispano Comunitario de Nebraska*

Teresa Mardesen, community Relations Manager, *Farm Credit Services of America*

Amanda Martinez, Engineering Manager/D&I Community Champion, *Flywheel*

Noah McClain, Product Development Manager, *Mutual of Omaha*

Lonnie Michael Jr., Database Marketing Manager, *Mutual of Omaha*

Craig Moody, Managing Partner, *Verdis Group*

Astrid Munn, Child and Family Managing Attorney, *Immigrant Legal Center*

Kathy Peissig, Senior Director of Talent Development, *Werner Enterprises Inc.*

Amanda Ponce, College Success Navigator, *Metropolitan Community College*

Lucy Puentes, Program Manager, *Omaha Outward Bound School*

Mindy Rush Chipman, Director of Equity & Diversity, *Lincoln Commission on Human Rights*

Graciela Sharif, Cultural Diversity Coordinator for Leadership in Education and Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND), *Munroe-Meyer Institute for Genetics and Rehabilitation, UNMC*

Comi Sharif, Senior Associate, *Koley Jessen*

Alejandra Sinecio, Board Chair, *South Omaha Community Care Council*

Jeffrey Southall, Assistant Director, *University of Nebraska Omaha*

Nicky Sullivan, Homeownership Success Coordinator, *Habitat for Humanity of Omaha*

Jannette Taylor, Executive Director, *Social Impact Outliers*

Kimberly Thomas, Executive Director, *CASA for Douglas County*

Ashley Rae Turner, Marketing Communications Specialist, *North End Teleservices*

Drew Weitz, Director of Equity Research, Portfolio Manager, *Weitz Investment Management*

Dan Whisler, Manager Radiation Protection & Chemistry, *Omaha Public Power District*

# INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES



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For more information about the program or to learn how to become a sponsor, please visit:  
[www.inclusive-communities.org/leaddiversity](http://www.inclusive-communities.org/leaddiversity).

## **About Inclusive Communities**

*Since 1938, Inclusive Communities has served Nebraska, Iowa, and the region by directing our efforts in the areas of youth, community and workplace human relations, and leadership programming to achieve our mission of creating inclusive communities. For more information or to find out how you can help, visit our website at: [www.inclusive-communities.org](http://www.inclusive-communities.org).*

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