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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Application Window Opens for Second Annual DEI Workplace Excellence Awards

WEST DES MOINES, IA (TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2022) – The West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce (WDM Chamber) is thrilled to announce the application window, donation recipients, and event details for the second annual Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Workplace Excellence Awards (DEI Awards).

In the first year of this community-filled event, there were 38 applications across 11 categories. A panel of community leaders familiar with DEI work served as judges. 12 award recipients were recognized at the awards event, each of which shared their unique and inspiring story to a room of 250 community members.

The 2022 DEI Awards categories include:

- Small Business: 1-49 employees
- Medium Business: 50 – 249 employees
- Large Business: 250 and above
- Nonprofit
- Government
- Education
- DEI Leader of the Year
- DEI Emerging Leader of the Year: age 39 and under
- DEI Student Leader of the Year
- DEI Ally of the Year
- Best Inclusion Initiative

Businesses, organizations, and individuals from across Central Iowa can apply any time before July 10 at 5 PM. The award recipients will be named and celebrated at an event on Wednesday, September 1st from 4:30 – 7:30 PM at the Community Choice Convention Center.

[Registration](#) is now open for the 2022 DEI Awards. Individual tickets and tables are available. The event is all about learning and growing as individuals and organizations as we celebrate the work being done to make our region more inclusive. As an event focused on embracing what makes everyone different, attendees are encouraged to wear their brightest apparel. Community members will enjoy appetizers, beverages, and live music by Guitarras ATM.

One way the WDM Chamber furthers the impact of these awards each year is through a donation to a local nonprofit that supports social justice. Local entities applied to be considered by the WDM Chamber's DEI Committee. This year's deliberation led to a tie vote between the final two nonprofit organizations. Therefore, a portion of the 2022 DEI Awards sponsorship proceeds will be donated to both [CultureALL](#) and the [Latina Leadership Initiative](#).

“It feels really wonderful to be selected and to share this honor with the Latino Leadership Initiative,” said CultureALL Executive Director, Sherry Gupta. “The West Des Moines Chamber has made impressive strides with clearly defined goals over the past few years to support minority-owned businesses and to create a space that feels like everyone belongs. [This] leadership in demonstrating how inclusion of diversity elevates us all makes this truly an honor. CultureALL will use the donation to give more children the opportunity to practice being inclusive as they meet with their neighbors whose life experiences may be very different from their own.”

Latina Leadership Initiative’s mission is to build bridges to uplift and empower Latinas. “We are an organization committed to maintaining a culture of diversity and inclusion practices through our programming and leadership,” said Executive Director, Diana Echeverria. “We provide a culturally relevant and appropriate leadership program for Latina women. Over five months, Latinas acquire leadership training, mentorship, and expanded access to career and leadership opportunities. Most importantly, they embrace their identity, culture and building bridges with the broader communities in Iowa. The WDM Chamber’s DEI Awards donation will allow us to expand our resources and bring in another cohort of emerging Latina leaders in 2023.”

The WDM Chamber’s vision is to make West Des Moines the best suburban city in America to live, work, and play. This means the community and all of Central Iowa must work together to make inclusion a priority. The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Workplace Excellence Awards is one of the many ways the chamber hopes to further DEI efforts and increase workforce attraction in the region.

The DEI Awards are made possible thanks to leaders and organizations aligning with these important inclusion initiatives. These include Minority Leader Scholarship Sponsor: American Equity; Awards Partner – Gold Sponsor: NCMIC; and Champion Sponsors: American Enterprise Group, IMT Insurance, Merchants Bonding Company, Sammons Financial, Simpson College, and Turner Construction. Contact [Kara Matheson](#), Sr. Director of Workforce Development at the WDM Chamber for more information on partnership opportunities for the DEI Awards.

To learn more about the DEI Awards application process, event details, and more, visit the WDM Chamber’s [website](#).

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About the WDM Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce is to champion all things West Des Moines by strengthening our area companies, providing personalized resources and attracting a top workforce to position WDM as the best suburban city in America. With 700+ members, we provide something for everyone. Learn more about the chamber and how to get involved at wdmchamber.org.