



**For Immediate Release:**

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**Media Contact:**

Stephen Grimm,  
Director of Marketing  
[sgrimm@thepartnership.org](mailto:sgrimm@thepartnership.org)

## **Assessment serves as tool to benchmark and inform WNY's D&I work** *Local companies asked to participate*

(Buffalo, NY) The Buffalo Niagara Partnership (BNP) is inviting the region's businesses to participate in an assessment to determine how far the Western New York (WNY) Community has progressed in their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices since the BNP's first assessment conducted in 2020.

Once the assessment is complete, the results will be made available to the public in a comprehensive report which will provide:

1. The opportunity to assess how employees have progressed in their diversity, equity, and inclusion practices since 2020
2. A snapshot of how WNY companies currently approach D&I across the region
3. WNY companies with actionable takeaways to address the needs of our region

"Effective, impactful Diversity and Inclusion policies that provide better opportunities for minorities and women to succeed in business are critical to creating a strong community and economic success in Erie County. The ECIDA is pleased to support the Buffalo Niagara Partnership in benchmarking and producing these reports, which will better inform us where and how we need to strengthen and improve diversity and inclusion efforts," said ECIDA President and CEO John Cappellino.

The BNP encourages as many companies as possible to participate in this short survey to get an accurate snapshot of the progress that the region has made and where there is still room for growth. "A high level of participation will enable us to provide local businesses with statistically significant results that can serve as a benchmark and guide for companies to advance their D&I work," said Dottie Gallagher, President & CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership.

The Assessment will be particularly helpful in determining how far WNY has progressed in regard to the key findings from 2020 including:

- 72% of respondents had started a D&I journey
  - 27% of respondents had not yet begun their D&I journey
- 17% of respondents reported that their company had set concrete D&I goals
  - Only 5% of respondents said their company had achieved those goals
- Non-profits were most likely to have started D&I work
  - Manufacturers and construction firms were least likely to have started D&I work

Many local companies like Five Star Bank have already seen positive results from their D&I efforts. "Five Star Bank is dedicated to creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, respected, and appreciated and we've seen firsthand that a workforce diverse in background, knowledge, skill, and experience is clearly better," said Laurie R. Collins, Chief Human Resources Officer. "We applaud the BNP for taking the lead in advancing diversity and inclusion initiatives across our region, and we're honored to partner with them to provide knowledge, experience, and guidance to our colleagues throughout Western New York's business community."

**An email assessment link will be sent** to upper management employees who work at businesses in Erie and Niagara counties that have 5 or more employees through Qualtrics **starting July 18, 2022**.

If your organization does not receive a link, visit our website to take the survey. (*NOTE: Survey link will be available starting Monday, July 18<sup>th</sup>.*) The survey period will **end on August 14, 2022**. The assessment results report will be released in the fall of 2022.

The business community assessment survey is made possible through the generous support of Title Sponsors – [ECIDA](#) and [Five Star Bank](#) & Presenting Sponsors – [Crowley Webb](#), [CFGB \(Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo\)](#), [National Fuel](#), and [Verizon](#). The BNP worked with [14 partners](#) to present the assessment.

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#### **ABOUT THE BUFFALO NIAGARA PARTNERSHIP:**

**The Buffalo Niagara Partnership is the area's regional chamber of commerce and** privately funded economic development organization. BNP members employ more than a quarter of a million people in the Buffalo Niagara region. By mobilizing members and strategic partners around common goals, the BNP grows private investment and jobs in Buffalo Niagara through advocacy, business development, and convening.