



The Greater Bloomington
Chamber of Commerce

Better business. Better community.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce Offering
Free Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training to all Members**

Bloomington, IN – September 1, 2021 – Beginning this fall, The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce is offering Chamber members free Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) trainings through a grant from the Duke Energy Foundation. Trainings will be provided by The Guarden, which offers diversity education training for institutions, corporations, and organizations of all sizes.

Six topics will be covered this fall semester. Members may take as many as they would like. The topics include:

- October 1: **Foundational Bias & Micro-Aggressions Workshop** – This workshop focuses on implicit and explicit biases and the impact on communities and the workplace. We'll look at progressive models that unpack stereotype and lead to marginalization. Participants will complete self-assessments and have opportunities to apply theory to practice by engaging in small group dialogue and activities that frame bias.
- October 29: **Culturally-sensitive communication** – These workshops offer an opportunity to explore how to engage in culturally-textured conversations, pursue conflict remediation, and ways to learn and unlearn triggering language. This is a time for participants to ask any questions they have that may be shaded with stereotype and bias. This workshop also will train participants on how to better engage in community dialogue surrounding culturally sensitive conversations.
- November 5: **Imposter Syndrome** – There are many factors that impact “how we show up” in the workplace. In addition to salient identities, many people struggle to reconcile their internal battle with external battles which can lead to issues of imposter syndrome. Understanding this phenomenon with a cultural context will give colleagues a vantage point to facilitating inclusion, promoting leadership, and establishing best practices for engagement and communication.
- November 19: **Exploring Anti-Racism** – This training focuses on finding novel and practical ways to understand, explain, and solve problems of racial inequity and injustice. Rather than questioning people, this experience will beg the question “What is wrong with the policy?” Antiracist questions leads to antiracist narratives, effective policy solutions, and impactful advocacy campaigns that cut to the root of racial inequality: racist policy.
- December 3: **Inclusive Excellence** – This session will introduce a strategic business case for diversity to employers while reviewing best practices for delivering diversity training. During training, participants will learn about the training module to be able to implement training in your workplace and discuss how to prevent and reduce resistance with employees in order to create buy-in.
- December 17: **DEI Work Session** – This session will allow Chamber members to take a deeper dive into their diversity goals and strategic plan. We will spend quite a bit of time reviewing tools that are helpful for DEI education for staff, and we'll help attendees map out 6 month plans for furthering their DEI efforts. To maximize experience, participants should attend at least 2 of the other workshops PRIOR to attending this session.

“Each of these sessions will be interactive and led by participant need(s). Participants should come ready to work, collaborate, and learn, and they should be committed to learning, unlearning, and relearning for as long as it takes. These sessions are ideal for companies/individuals that want a deeper understanding of the consequences of ‘-isms’ and

phobias, and leaders who are ready to charter new paths,” said Nichelle Whitney, Owner and Principal Consultant of The Guarden.

These trainings will be held virtually this semester from 1:00-3:00 p.m. EST. These will be offered at no cost and exclusively to Chamber members.

“This opportunity to provide free training to Chamber members around the critical issues of diversity, equity and inclusion is transformational for the community. So many members have asked for resources to train their employees about DEI, and we are excited that this program is launching for all,” said Erin Predmore, President & CEO of The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce. “Our thanks to the forward-thinking Duke Energy Foundation for their support of this important initiative.”

“Chambers of commerce such as Bloomington’s have always been valuable resources for local businesses as they deal with current issues,” said Duke Energy Community Relations Manager Bruce Calloway. “These workshops are an example of that and are free to chamber members interested in offering diversity and inclusion training to their employees.”

Registration for the trainings will be available starting on September 1, 2021 through the Chamber website at www.ChamberBloomington.org.

About the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce:

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit membership organization serving as our community’s leading advocate for business. We offer unique leadership opportunities, meaningful volunteer activities, and exclusive business-building programs focused on critical economic, civic, and social priorities. Chamber members support each other and community initiatives, sharing information and resources to help create economic opportunity and community well-being. At the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, we believe that better business leads to a better community.

About The Guarden:

The The Guarden is a place where things can grow. Founded by Nichelle Whitney, The Guarden offers diversity education training for institutions, corporations, and organizations of all sizes. The education is approached from a lens of grace and reaching for the highest point of unity, so workshops usually include opportunities for introspection and centers on helping individuals reach for reconciliation rather than resentment. The Guarden's services are founded on three guiding principles: everyone deserves education, education comes with accountability, we choose to extend grace. The Guarden offers keynote addresses, workshops and training for groups of all sizes and industries. We conduct training in-person and virtually and with context to healthcare/STEM, corporate America, local government, and higher education. The Guarden focuses on strategic partnerships, methodical approaches to education, and imperfection in humanity, so we ask the tough questions to get you and your team to achieve collective goals.

Contact:

Kaytee Lorentzen, Marketing & Communications Coordinator
(812) 336-6381 / klorentzen@ChamberBloomington.org
www.ChamberBloomington.org

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