



Media Contact

Casey Cawthon

Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Indy Chamber

ccawthon@indy-chamber.com

317.526.8722

For Immediate Release: October 25, 2021

Business Equity for Indy Marks One Year of Advancing Racial Equality

Central Indiana Companies Commit More than \$250 Million and Thousands of Volunteer Hours Toward a More Inclusive Economy

INDIANAPOLIS – Business Equity for Indy (BEI), a joint venture of Central Indiana Corporate Partnership (CICP) and the Indy Chamber, in collaboration with the Indianapolis Urban League, today hosted a virtual event to highlight the corporate community’s progress in activities and programs to improve racial equity and economic opportunity across Central Indiana.

“Business Equity for Indy (BEI) was formed last summer during a period of intense racial tension across our nation following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Over the past year, BEI member companies have come together to outline meaningful actions to advance racial equity across Central Indiana,” said Jeffrey Harrison, BEI Chair and President & CEO of Citizens Energy Group.

The event also commemorated one year of [the Indy Racial Equity Pledge](#), a commitment by corporate and civic organizations to advance racial equity in Indianapolis and neighboring communities.

Highlighted accomplishments include the following:

- Twenty-two businesses have signed and made progress on the Indy Racial Equity Pledge, committing to more than \$250 million in investments and thousands of hours toward racial equity goals.
- Five CEO-led BEI task forces composed of more than 80 business and community leaders have formed to identify opportunities for the corporate community to advance racial equity in the areas of hiring and promotion; procurement and participation; learning and talent; impediments to health; and public policy through collaboration, creation, and investment.

- The Procurement and Participation task force – led by local Black-owned businesses, Indy corporations, the Indy Chamber, and the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council (Mid-States MSDC) – held a procurement roundtable in August. More [procurement roundtables](#) are on the horizon.
- The Impediments to Health task force spearheaded the creation of an online [Vaccinations Employer Playbook](#) to help ensure that companies large and small in our region are ready and prepared to help educate their workforce about getting vaccinated.

“As corporate leaders, we have a responsibility to help build a more equitable economy and society for people in Central Indiana,” said David A. Ricks, chairman and chief executive officer of Eli Lilly and Company. “Through our participation in the Indy Racial Equity Pledge, we continue to hold ourselves accountable for shifting business behaviors to expand opportunities for communities of color, particularly Black Americans.”

Tony Mason, President & CEO of the Indianapolis Urban League, explained that BEI’s efforts come at a critical time in our community’s history. “The work of BEI is an important complement to the work of the Indianapolis Urban League, particularly our African American Quality of Life Initiative,” said Mason. “Together, we can change lives by engaging with members of the Black community and other communities of color to help design both immediate actions and long-term goals for advancing racial equity.”

Harrison concluded that BEI members are determined to create both immediate and sustainable change for racial equity. “BEI and the Indy Racial Equity Pledge together demonstrate the local corporate community’s keen sense of urgency for advancing racial and economic equality here in Central Indiana,” said Harrison. “While we are not nearly finished with this challenging work, together we are striving to make the goals of BEI part of the fabric of the Central Indiana business community.”

View today’s event [here](#). Featured speakers include Citizens Energy Group President & CEO and BEI Chair Jeffrey Harrison; Indianapolis Urban League President & CEO Tony Mason; Eli Lilly & Company Senior Vice President, Human Resources and Diversity Steve Fry; and IU Health President & CEO Dennis Murphy.

Visit the recently launched BEI website for more information and additional resources at www.businessequityindy.com. Progress made on Indy Racial Equity Pledges can be found at www.indyraciaequitypledge.com.

###

About [Business Equity for Indy](#)

BEI is a joint venture of the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership and the Indy Chamber, in collaboration with the Indianapolis Urban League, to grow a more inclusive business climate

and build greater equity and economic opportunity for the Indy Region's Black residents and people of color.

About the [Central Indiana Corporate Partnership](#)

The Central Indiana Corporate Partnership (CICP) was formed in 1999 to bring together the chief executives of Central Indiana's prominent corporations, foundations and universities in a strategic and collaborative effort dedicated to the region's continued prosperity and growth. To advance this mission, CICP sponsors six key talent and industry sector initiatives, AgriNovus Indiana, Ascend Indiana, BioCrossroads, Conexus Indiana, Energy Systems Network and TechPoint, each of which addresses challenges and opportunities unique to its respective area: agbiosciences, talent and workforce development, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and logistics, energy technology and technology. To learn more about CICP, visit www.cicpindiana.com.

About the [Indy Chamber](#)

The Indy Chamber serves as a voice of progress and improvement in the Indianapolis region, uniting business and community to maintain a strong economy and quality of life on behalf of thousands of members across Indiana's largest metropolitan economy. The Chamber's advocacy efforts, networking events, economic development initiatives, and other member benefits promote success for individual members and a more competitive, pro-growth climate across Indianapolis. In June 2021, the Indy Chamber was designated by ACCE as the 2021 Chamber of the Year.

About the [Indianapolis Urban League](#)

Founded in 1965, the Indianapolis Urban League is a nonprofit, non-partisan, interracial, community-based, human services agency dedicated to assisting African Americans, other minorities and disadvantaged individuals to achieve social and economic equality. Annually, the IUL provides direct services and advocacy in the areas of: education and youth services, economic and workforce development, health and quality of life, civic engagement and leadership, and civil rights and racial justice empowerment. IUL is one of 90 affiliates of the National Urban League serving 300 communities in 36 states and the District of Columbia.