



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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70 Orlando Business Executives Sign First-Ever Regional Corporate Pledge Promising to Act for Racial Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Orlando, Fla. – Orlando’s business community signaled commitment to improve regional diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) outcomes today by launching its “Take the Pledge” initiative. Seventy CEOs and top executives added their companies’ names and joined the regional effort focused on raising the growth potential of residents by creating opportunities for those long-affected by racial inequality and ensuring pathways for participation in the economy.

To accomplish this, the Orlando Economic Partnership (the Partnership) engaged Orlando’s business leaders across varied industries and from diverse backgrounds including its board of directors, investors, and community partners to form a task force to address critical hurdles to achieving its mission of Broad-based Prosperity™. The task force, chaired by the Partnership Chair Elect Tony Jenkins, market president of Florida Blue, convened through the latter part of 2020. Jenkins brought decades of experience and leadership in the area of DEI.

“To fully achieve our region’s promise, where Orlando is a place in which equity and inclusivity are the foundation for prosperity, we must exponentially increase our efforts to battle racism,” said Tim Giuliani, president and CEO of the Partnership. “This is the time for the business community, in partnership with other leaders, to stand together to address racism so we can build a better future for our region. The Partnership is here as a resource to help businesses with information and tools to take action.”

The result of the task force’s work: A call to expand a portfolio of programs and collaborative engagements that are aligned with the pledge. Programs already in place include the following:

- [**BRACE**](#), a free, bi-lingual service helps small- or medium-sized businesses find long-term recovery and resiliency resources, tools and programming as they navigate the challenges of this unprecedented economic environment and prepare for other possible future disruptions.
- [**Skills-based hiring**](#) helps companies increase workplace diversity and improve business outlooks by focusing on skills and competencies and re-think job requirements.

- [Tech Connect](#) creates a scalable process to match local company needs with local companies' skill sets with a focus on identifying minority-owned startups and entrepreneurs.
- [Women's Initiative](#) provides needed resources for women and minority-owned businesses with the tools they need to build the future they envision for themselves.
- [Site Evaluation & Marketing Program](#) - sponsored by Duke Energy, is a multi-pronged approach to identify, evaluate and market industrial sites in the Orlando region for development or redevelopment. The program's evaluation criteria consider sites located in opportunity zones and under-served communities.
- [Orlando Prosperity scorecard](#) tracks economic performance and community development through the lens of achieving Broad-based Prosperity.™

CALLING ON BUSINESS LEADERS TO SIGN THE PLEDGE AND PARTICIPATE:

Corporate leaders in Orlando have laid out a course of action and are now inviting the rest of our community to sign the pledge and participate. The pledge is available on the Partnership's [Take the Pledge website](#) and includes eight statements of commitment and allows CEOs and executives to add their signatures.

CEOs AND EXECUTIVES WHO TAKE THE PLEDGE ARE SAYING:

- **We will** educate ourselves, review examples and share insights through partner organizations such as non-profits and educational institutions into the history of systemic racism throughout our region and the barriers it continues to present today.
- **We will** create opportunities for sessions to listen to those affected and marginalized by these barriers to learn how we can help, with follow up on actionable areas focusing on what's working, what needs improvement and where we can be most effective.
- **We will** identify, support, and collaborate with specific non-profits and other partner organizations who work tirelessly in marginalized and vulnerable communities, asking for careful review of work in marginalized sectors in our region and identify the work still to be done.
- **We will** use our power, influence and position to amplify unheard voices and endorse policies that lead to racial justice and opportunities for all.
- **We will** improve the employment, training, wage equity, growth potential, advancement, support and success of black and brown people in our workplace, workforce and marketplace, and commit to ways that minority owned businesses are intentionally included in pipeline opportunities. We will pledge to remove barriers, diversify our talent pool and create upward mobility employment opportunities through implementing skills-based hiring as an innovative hiring practice.
- **We will** continue ongoing conversations with CEOs and executive leaders to collectively address issues of social injustice, racism, and biases in our communities and organizations, confirming within organizations DEI is a strategic imperative with demonstrated commitment and actions.
- **We acknowledge** the critical importance of accountability to our community and pledge to collaborate in annual efforts to track and report our contributions to the collective (regional) goal of creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive business community.

- **We will** support efforts to implement effective community-based models that improve conditions within vulnerable communities throughout Central Florida, using our voices and position to amplify and elevate examples of success.

WHO HAS TAKEN THE PLEDGE?

Orlando Economic Partnership Governors Council and Board of Directors:

1. Cari Coats, Accendo Leadership Advisory Group
2. Linh Dang, Addition Financial Credit Union
3. Daryl Tol, AdventHealth
4. Tanisha Gary, African American Chamber of Commerce of Central FL
5. Ginny Childs, Akerman LLP
6. Dan Pollock, AT&T
7. Tim Baker, Baker Barrios Architects
8. Steve Alch, Bank of America/Merrill Lynch
9. Gary Cain, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida
10. George Huddleston, Catalyst Design Group
11. Jim Gray, CBRE, Inc.
12. Phil Zeman, CenterState Bank
13. Mark Brewer, Central Florida Foundation
14. Glen Gilzean, Central Florida Urban League, Inc.
15. Brandi Markiewicz, CI Group
16. Marni Spence, CLA
17. Jim Seneff, CNL Financial Group Inc
18. Marc Hoenstine, Duke Energy
19. Karen Willis, Early Learning Coalition of Orange County
20. Carlos Carbonel, Echo Interaction Group
21. Daryl Holt, Electronic Arts
22. Ken Croston Jr., Electronic Locksmith, Inc.
23. Wendy Kurtz, Elizabeth Charles & Associates. LLC
24. Suneera Madhani, Fattmerchant
25. Greg Dryden, Fifth Third Bank
26. Rob Panepinto, Florentine Strategies
27. Deidre Keller, Florida A&M University College of Law
28. Tony Jenkins, Florida Blue
29. Steve Hogan, Florida Citrus Sports
30. Paul Sohl, Florida High Tech Corridor Council
31. Geoff Rogers, Full Sail University
32. Olive Gaye, Gencare Resources Healthcare
33. Jason Siegel, Greater Orlando Sports Commission
34. Orlando Evora, Greenberg Traurig
35. Steve Orosz, Hanover Family Builders, LLC
36. Jeff Hayward, Heart of Florida United Way
37. Scott Mann, Highforge
38. Gabriela Ortigoni, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando
39. Glenn Adams, Holland & Knight
40. Chris Brockman, Holland & Knight

41. Dr. Mimi Hull, Hull & Associates
42. Paul Drayton, JPMorgan Chase
43. Kirt Bocox, KPMG LLP
44. Eddy Moratin, LIFT Orlando
45. Bill Dymond, Lowndes
46. Randall Hartley Nemours Children's Hospital
47. The Honorable Vicki-Elaine Felder, Orange County Public Schools
48. Dr. Barbara Jenkins, Orange County Public Schools
49. Tim Giuliani, Orlando Economic Partnership
50. The Honorable Andy Gardiner, Orlando Health
51. Alex Martins, Orlando Magic
52. Chris Brown, Orlando Repertory Theatre
53. JoAnn Newman, Orlando Science Center
54. David Karabag, Orlando Sentinel Media Group
55. Clint Bullock, Orlando Utilities Commission
56. Linda Ferrone, Orlando Utilities Commission
57. Michelle Chandler, SchenkelShultz Architecture
58. Nancy Schwalb, Schwalb Public Relations
59. Todd R. Langner, SESCO Lighting
60. Mandy Weitknecht, Skanska USA
61. Christopher Sorensen, Sorensen Moving and Storage
62. Dr. Jeremy Levitt, Stono Institute for Freedom, Justice and Security
63. Sandy Hostetter, Truist
64. Tajuan Mills, Truist
65. Dr. Sandy Shugart, Valencia College
66. Jeff Vahle, Walt Disney World
67. Christy Whitley, Wells Fargo
68. Derek Jones, Wells Fargo
69. Paul Briggs, WFTV/WRDQ
70. Michael Brown, Wyndham Destinations

COMMUNITY QUOTES:

“Leaders must put decisive action behind the pledge and take the necessary steps to change the inequities within their organizations and use their influence and resources to make change happen within the community,” said Tony Jenkins, Florida Blue market president. “A commitment to change by business leaders must be a top priority.”

“It’s encouraging to see the business community recognize its role in creating real change on these issues,” said Sandy Hostetter, Central Florida Regional President, Truist Bank. “We all share in the responsibility to move the region forward. The Orlando region can’t be the best version of itself without addressing racism and bias.”

Links:

CEOs and Executives Take the Pledge:

www.Orlando.org/DEI

For more information, please contact Laureen.Martinez@Orlando.org or at 407-242-3982.

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About the Orlando Economic Partnership

The Orlando Economic Partnership (the Partnership) is a public-private, not-for-profit economic and community development organization that works to advance broad-based prosperity by strengthening Orlando's economy, amplifying Orlando's story, championing regional priorities, empowering community leaders and building a brilliant region. These five foundational objectives serve to improve the region's competitiveness while responding to the needs of communities, residents and businesses. For more information, visit www.Orlando.org.