



For Immediate Release:

June 1, 2023

Media Contact:

Kenya Hobbs
Director, Community
Engagement & Equity Initiatives
Khobbs@thepartnership.org

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership announces second cohort of Minority-Owned Business Initiative *Program Expanded to Respond to Applicant Needs*

(BUFFALO, N.Y.) The Buffalo Niagara Partnership's (BNP's) Minority Business Initiative (MBI) strives to eliminate the obstacles that have long hindered minority business ownership by providing minority-owned businesses access to BNP's extensive resources and networks to build their business. The 2023 cohort was announced at today's 6th Annual DEI Symposium and includes two tracks to better serve participant needs. The MBI Program is funded through generous underwriting of Bank of America, National Grid, and the Buffalo Niagara Partnership.

Access to BNP's MBI program has brought participant businesses increased exposure to new audiences, networks, and professional development programs. "My first year as a member has been terrific and I would highly recommend membership to other BIPOC - Minority businesses," said pilot cohort member Yves Richard Blanc of Blanc Global Dynamism/[Blanc Photographie](#).

Based on the success of last year's pilot program, BNP committed to continuing the program in 2023. As the applicants began to flow in, BNP recognized the original pilot cohort of 5 participants would need to be expanded to allow not only more participants, but a wider range of business sizes and types.

BNP's Kenya Hobbs, Director, Community Engagement & Equity Initiatives explains the change: "It was clear that the pilot MBI program made a real difference to last year's participants, and we knew that we wanted to continue that important work with this year's cohort. This year's initiative also allows us to nurture smaller and emerging businesses within the WNY business community. By providing access to BNP resources and networking opportunities, these businesses can gain the tools they will need to succeed and grow."

MBI participants will:

- Receive a two-year sponsored membership in the BNP.
- Attend an array of networking and educational events. This is an excellent way to immediately engage these minority-owned businesses with other senior leaders across many different sectors.

- Based on their needs, some participants will also be eligible to acquire a seat at the BNP's Executive Exchange. This is a unique peer-to-peer professional leadership development opportunity to meet, share experiences, and resolve business challenges with other senior-level managers.

The 2023 program will include the following businesses:

- [BSMART Coaching](#)
 - BSMART Coaching works with small to mid-size companies providing assessments, coaching, intercultural competency development, training, thought leadership, and change management solutions.
- [Calhoun Custom Creations LLC](#)
 - Calhoun Custom Creations is a Bakery and Event Boutique specializing in custom cakes, cookies, desserts, and event planning. Their goal is to create an immersive space that acts not only as a bakery and event boutique but a community "hub" for local cultural creatives looking for a collaborative space.
- [Denine Jackson Interiors](#)
 - Denine Jackson Interiors looks to change the home renovation game and empower its clients to make confident decisions and execute their vision with precision. Mixing modern elements with the mid-century modern color palette, Denine Jackson's background in engineering and eye for detail ensures that the look comes together for a timeless and fresh space.
- [E-scent-ials Body Care LLC](#)
 - Locally owned and operated, E-Scent-ials Body Care offers body butters, soaps, hair care, and men's skincare products that are all natural and made with essential oils.
- [Executive Sweeps LLC](#)
 - Executive Sweeps LLC Commercial Cleaning is a locally owned and operated commercial cleaning company servicing Buffalo and many other areas in the state of New York. They provide customized janitorial services for facilities including schools, medical buildings, and property management holdings.
- [Golden Cup Coffee](#)
 - Golden Cup Coffee is a roaster and distributor of high-quality coffee & teas. They provide fresh roasted coffee & high-quality beverages to consumers, restaurants, offices, churches, and more.
- [GROW Services LLC](#)
 - GROW Services LLC focuses on organization-wide diversity initiatives along with creating, implementing, and evaluating IDEA strategy for the organization. Focusing on integrating IDEA components into all aspects of the organization, ensuring that an IDEA lens is used when making decisions, building teams, and creating the organizational culture.
- [Hair Empire](#)
 - Hair Empire provides superior quality hair services and offers a wide range of hair products for women of all races. Committed to innovation and new product development, they provide 100% Natural human hair without any synthetic fibers or chemical processing.
- [Herne Law, PLLC](#)

- An enrolled member of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Owen Herne is experienced in both Indian law and corporate law. He has provided counsel on the most complex issues facing Indian nations today.
- [The Mahogany Events LLC](#)
 - The Mahogany is a family-owned and renovated event venue that features two floors of event space and a professional photography business on the third level. Bringing people together with a modern-day twist, the Mahogany serves the Buffalo area and all of WNY.
- [SprintMarketer.com](#)
 - SprintMarketer.com helps businesses accelerate their growth by demystifying digital marketing.
- [That Brown Bag](#)
 - That Brown Bag (also referred to as 'The Bag') is a minority business directory founded in 2018 to create a resource providing consumers with a one-stop shop to locate Black owned businesses in Buffalo, NY, and the surrounding area. The publication has since expanded to add a Brown Bag Business Association which is a membership-based group centered around providing information and support to the businesses listed within the publication.
- [Thyme-N-Honey](#)
 - Thyme-N-Honey is a Food Consultant company specializing in teaching demonstrations of Classical and Modern cooking techniques. Their specialized classes are designed to improve culinary independence. Thyme-N-Honey also provides Pop-Up Dinner events offered in the comfort of your home!
- [WhittCare](#)
 - WhittCare's mission is to change the world one person at a time, by enabling under-resourced youth in WNY to obtain economic mobility through well-crafted coaching and mentoring. They provide adulting workshops that focus on transitioning to college, career preparedness, and personal development for youth and young adults in underserved communities.
- [Whose Your Landlord?](#)
 - Whose Your Landlord (WYL) is an online platform where users can read and write reviews of home providers (owner/operators, apartment buildings, property managers). WYL amplifies the voices of residents by enabling them to share their honest, authentic rental experiences.
- [ZoomRide](#)
 - ZoomRide is a local non-emergency medical transportation company in Erie and Niagara counties with a heart for the people and the team.

“By proactively expanding the size and scope of our MBI program, we are able to share BNP resources with a wider range of the business community. We hope that this not only encourages more diversity in our membership but also amplifies those voices by opening pathways to board and industry participation,” said Dottie Gallagher, President & CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership.

Participants will be introduced in a bi-monthly blog series on ThePartnership.org/blog starting in July 2023.

#

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. Learn more at thepartnership.org.