

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 13, 2022

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Greater Washington Partnership Releases *Regional Blueprint for Inclusive Growth* After Year-Long, In-Depth Process

The 10-year roadmap aims to close equity gaps and make the Capital Region the most inclusive economy in the country. The Blueprint builds on the historic \$4.7 billion collective effort by the Capital Region business community to support underserved communities in the region.

Monday, June 13, 2022 – Today, the Greater Washington Partnership published the [Regional Blueprint for Inclusive Growth](#), a 10-year roadmap to help the Capital Region from Baltimore to Richmond close equity gaps and ensure that all residents have the opportunity to thrive, regardless of race, gender, or zip code.

The *Blueprint* is the result of a year-long process that engaged more than 200 community members and public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders to identify the most pressing challenges and most impactful opportunities to advance inclusive growth across the super-region. The finished product is a 120+ page in-depth analysis that offers 19 solutions, 57 recommendations, and 12 case studies developed around six inter-connected pillars:

- **Education:** Affordable, accessible, high-quality education & skill-building
- **Workforce:** Family-sustaining and inclusive employment opportunities
- **Access to Capital:** Community wealth generation & thriving entrepreneurship ecosystems
- **Affordable Housing:** Affordable, sustainable housing in thriving communities
- **Infrastructure:** High-performing and accessible transportation & digital infrastructure
- **Health Equity:** Accessible and effective health care ecosystems

The *Blueprint* takes a holistic and interconnected view of the inclusive growth needs and opportunities across the region, applying a super-regional lens and emphasizing the roles that the private, public, and social sectors can play in addressing these inequities. The *Blueprint* aims to identify, amplify, and scale efforts that are already underway in communities across the region. Further, the *Blueprint* will help to identify new collaborations and elevate opportunities to catalyze innovative solutions.

For example, one of the solutions within the Education pillar is to invest in talent development through work-based learning opportunities. A recommendation within that solution is to provide paid work experience for high school and college students. Several examples of in-flight efforts are provided, such as CareerWise DC, a business apprenticeship program for high school students.

Today's announcement comes on the heels of a historic \$4.7 billion collective commitment by the Capital Region business community to support underserved communities in the region, which was announced in March at Howard University, alongside Vice President Kamala Harris, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, and U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Isabella Guzman. At that event, the Vice President recognized the Partnership's mission as a model for collaboration and impact that should be replicated across the nation.

That landmark commitment is part of a larger vision outlined in the new publication. The *Blueprint* will serve as the cornerstone of the Partnership's ongoing effort to curate ideas and catalyze solutions

across sectors, creating an inclusive economy that works for everyone. It is designed for and by the region and will serve as a guidepost and call-to-action for private sector engagement with the public and social sectors to address economic inequalities.

“Through cross-sector collaboration and leadership we have the opportunity to create transformational change throughout our communities,” said **Jason Wright, President of the Washington Commanders and Co-chair of the Inclusive Growth Strategy Council**. “The *Blueprint’s* business-oriented approach for area stakeholders harnesses a combination of advocacy, resource sharing, financial investments, and organizational change that will pave the way for everyone in our region to succeed.”

The Partnership defines inclusive economic growth as growth that creates a prosperous, equitable, and resilient society for people of all backgrounds and incomes, particularly for those facing the greatest barriers, by broadly expanding economic opportunity and enhancing quality of life across the Capital Region. The *Blueprint* is the culminating effort of the Inclusive Growth Strategy Council, a coalition of more than 45 business leaders that was launched in April 2021. Co-Chaired by Jason Wright and Sheila Johnson (CEO, Salamander Hotels & Resorts), the Council was created to identify and address near- and long-term inclusive growth needs and opportunities for the region to achieve a sustainable, equitable, and thriving economy.

“The Capital Region abounds with committed leaders, diversity, resilience, ingenuity, and dynamism,” said **Francesca Ioffreda, Vice President for Inclusive Growth and Talent Initiatives at the Partnership**. “With our unique constellation of assets – from academic institutions to Fortune 500 companies, the federal government and hundreds of community-based organizations – the Capital Region is poised to be a national model for collective efforts that can drive equitable economic development and shared prosperity for all.”

The Partnership recognizes inclusive growth as a moral and an economic imperative. Inclusive economies create a better economic future for everyone, helping to harness local potential, build resiliency, and attract talent and investment. A McKinsey & Company study commissioned by the Partnership estimated that closing the racial wealth gap in the Capital Region alone has the potential to unlock \$35-50 billion in GDP by 2028. To successfully address the region’s economic disparities, collaborative efforts that leverage the breadth and depth of resources and experience across sectors are critical.

“Collaboration is vital to creating real change across the region,” said **Sheila Johnson, Founder and CEO of Salamander Hotels and Resorts, and Co-chair of the Inclusive Growth Strategy Council**. “By working together to create a prosperous, equitable, and resilient society for people of all backgrounds and incomes, we can ensure that our region and our communities will thrive for generations to come.”

The Partnership has a history of developing collaborative, long-term, action-oriented guides for the Capital Region. In 2017, the Partnership published the *Capital Region Blueprint for Regional Mobility*, a 10-year agenda for working together to make tangible progress on transit-oriented priorities, with specific actions that regional public leaders and private employers can take to create a 21st century transit system.

“Dedicated leaders and organizations across the region have a long history of fostering inclusive growth,” said **Tony Pierce, Partner in Charge of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer and Feld LLP’s Washington, DC office, and Chair of the Partnership’s Inclusive Growth Board Committee**. “The *Blueprint* will help harness the strength of the business community to deepen and scale efforts that create meaningful economic opportunities.”

Doubling down on the Vice President Harris' declaration, the Partnership believes that inclusive and equitable development should be at the forefront of decision-making for every business, government, and community organization across the region; our region's future success depends on it.

Supporting Statements

"Closing the racial wealth gap and increasing underserved communities' ability to access capital has long been a top priority of mine, and I'm glad to see the private sector, led by the Greater Washington Partnership, leading a coordinated effort in the Capital Region," said **U.S. Senator Mark R. Warner from Virginia**. "The release of this *Regional Blueprint for Inclusive Growth* is a great step towards building on the commitments from the business community made earlier this year, and I hope private entities will continue to collaborate across sectors and engage on coordinated approaches to close the racial wealth gap."

"The Greater Washington Partnership's *Blueprint* is the type of long-term, cross-sector investment required to engineer an inclusive regional economy," said **U.S. Senator Ben Cardin from Maryland**. "Addressing the historic, pervasive barriers that keep underserved communities locked in cycles of poverty will require investments from both the public and private sectors, so I applaud the Greater Washington Partnership for its leadership and work with stakeholders to create a roadmap to success. These investments in education and housing, workforce development, racial equity and access to capital are investments that will benefit every community in the Capital Region for years to come."

"I look forward to seeing the Greater Washington Partnership enact its *Blueprint for Inclusive Growth* in the National Capital Region," said **U.S. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton from the District of Columbia**. "Striving for equity has been a lifelong priority for me, from serving in Congress to chairing the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission to marching in the Civil Rights Movement. Creating more jobs, building more affordable housing, and improving access to health care are all important initiatives, but it is essential that they benefit everyone."

About the Greater Washington Partnership

The Greater Washington Partnership is a first-of-its-kind civic alliance of CEOs in the Capital Region, drawing from the leading public, private, and nonprofit organizations committed to making the region from Baltimore to Richmond one of the world's best places to live, work and build a business. Working in collaboration with leaders across our communities, the Partnership connects and leverages the region's extraordinary assets to catalyze inclusive, actionable solutions that strengthen the Capital Region as a leading global center for commerce, innovation, and shared prosperity.

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The following table provides a summary of the pillars, solutions, and recommendations. For the full overview, please see [here](#).

Regional Blueprint for Inclusive Growth Snapshot		
Pillars	Solutions	Recommendations
Pillar 1 – Education	Improve access to quality education	Early Childhood Education (ECE) access
		Continuing education benefits for employees
		Scholarships for underserved students
		Resource matchmaking to meet student & educator needs
	Enhance access to in-demand skills	Employer demand signaling
		Training for in-demand jobs
	Invest in talent development through work-based learning (WBL) opportunities	Early career exposure
		Paid work experience for high school & college students
		Employee-student mentoring
Pillar 2 – Workforce	Embrace inclusive hiring	Skills-based hiring
		Standardized credentialing
		Expanded recruiting sources
		Local hiring
	Promote equitable retention & advancement	Diverse talent composition
		DEI performance evaluation
		Best practices on empowering diverse voices
	Invest in employee well-being	Family-sustaining wages
		Paid leave
		Best practices for family-friendly policies
Pillar 3 – Access to Capital	Advance financial education & resiliency	Financial education resources
		Wealth creation resources
		Financial resiliency programs
	Support underrepresented entrepreneurs & Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs)	Supplier diversity
		Borrower accessibility
		Funding & capacity-building for CDFIs & MDIs
		Funding & capacity-building for diverse entrepreneurs
	Support entrepreneurship ecosystem connectedness	Entrepreneurship ecosystem mapping
		High-growth industry clusters
		Public-private funding models
Pillar 4 – Affordable Housing	Expand affordability	Pooled investment
		Pro-growth zoning advocacy
		Equitable loan processes
	Support stability	Employer-assisted housing
		Tenant’s rights & eviction protection
		Homeownership education
		Housing quality
	Decrease homelessness	Permanent supportive housing
		Interim housing
Pillar 5 – Infrastructure	Enhance access to high-quality public transit	Frequent, all-day transit
		Transit benefits & equitable transit fares
		Inclusive transit-oriented development
	Remove barriers to mobility	Transit-accessible worksites and subsidized multimodal access
		Seamless multimodal transportation options
	Increase digital connectivity	Affordable broadband and digital devices
		Accessible broadband
Pillar 6 – Health Equity	Increase affordability and access to equitable care	Integrated employer health
		Data collection improvements
		Resource matchmaking to support community care provider needs
	Improve maternal and infant health and well-being	Maternal health benefits
		Screening incentives
		Cohort support
	Bolster food & nutrition security	Access to healthy foods
		Public food benefits
	Enhance community resiliency	Support community associations
		Repurpose unutilized space for health care
		Region-wide coordinated care platform