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**Center for Economic Inclusion Expands Team and Talent
to Accelerate Pace of Equity and Inclusive Regional Economy**

Center Names Director of Employer Inclusivity, Digital Media & Events Specialist,
and Vice President of Systems Innovation

(SAINT PAUL, June 26) — Today, the Center for Economic Inclusion (Center) announced the addition of three new staff and positions: Samuel N. Ndely II is Director of Employer Inclusivity; Christopher S. McAbee is Digital Media & Events Specialist; and Andrea Ferstan is Vice President of Systems Innovation.

“In 2017, the Center was created to disrupt the stagnant regional ecosystem of economic development and diversity and inclusion initiatives. Our key strategy: equipping public- and private-sector leaders with the tools they need to dismantle institutional racism in their sectors – racist systems that constrain our regional economy and maintain wealth gaps between Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and White residents,” said Tawanna A. Black, Founder and CEO.

“As an increasing number of business leaders and policy makers recognize the need for this work, the demand for our expertise has been tremendous. We are growing our capacity to meet that demand and accelerate the pace of building a racially inclusive economy,” continued Black. “Sam, Chris, and Andrea are accomplished leaders and community advocates, each deeply committed to racial equity and shared prosperity. We are thrilled they have joined our team.”

Samuel N. Ndely II, Director of Employer Inclusivity

As Director of Employer Inclusivity, Ndely will lead the Center’s efforts to accelerate racial equity and inclusive economic growth in the region. He’ll work directly with private-sector employers, regional leaders, and community champions to equip them with the knowledge, tools, resources, and networks to disrupt racially and economically exclusive policies and practices and institutionalize new, racially inclusive talent, procurement, investment, and stakeholder policies, practices, and actions.

Most recently, Ndely was a business consultant for Meda (2017-2020), where he worked with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and connect them to resources, capital, and educational and networking opportunities. Ndely is Co-Founder of Graveti, an organization that helps BIPOC communities break into the technology startup industry in Minnesota.

“I am passionate about making our community and state a more inclusive and equitable one for EVERYONE,” said Ndely. “As Director of Employer Inclusivity, I will be working with companies to provide the tools and resources necessary to dismantle systemic racism and discrimination, while elevating BIPOC employees and businesses to achieve new opportunities.”

Christopher S. McAbee, Digital Media & Events Specialist

As Digital Media & Events Specialist, McAbee will help the Center quicken the pace of regional inclusive economic growth through storytelling, narrative change, and special events. Through digital and social media strategy, he will help to amplify the Center’s leadership as the regional authority on inclusive growth and economic inclusion. McAbee will also help execute inclusive Center-hosted events that drive meaningful impact for policy makers and employers in the region. Most recently, McAbee provided digital and marketing support to Houston White Apparel in North Minneapolis and other government, business, and nonprofit clients in the Twin Cities.

“Every day, our actions can help people in our community who are struggling the most to build better lives and feel hope for a brighter future,” said McAbee. “Ultimately, that is what the Center delivers to our region. In my work here, I will leverage the very best in digital media trends and innovation to support the Center’s mission to advance equity and inclusive economic growth.”

Andrea Ferstan, Vice President of Systems Innovation

As Vice President of Systems Innovation, Ferstan will lead the Center’s *Inclusive Future of Work Agenda*, a regional coalition of cross-sector partners focused on dismantling racist systems within the current workforce and economic engines while building new economic engines within communities of color. Ferstan serves as one of the Center’s lead systems-change strategists, coalition- and network-builders, and facilitators of strategic partnerships and policy efforts.

Most recently, Ferstan was executive director of the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council, a leadership entity for regional workforce development strategy in the seven-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul region. In that position, she set the annual policy agenda and regional workforce equity goals and advanced systems-reform efforts to achieve racial

equity in post-secondary attainment. Ferstan is a recognized leader in education and workforce development and is known for leading regional and statewide program and policy initiatives, driving process improvement, and developing cross-sector partnerships. Andrea has served as a national spokesperson and thought-partner.

“I am honored and thrilled to be part of such an extraordinary organization,” said Ferstan. “As Vice President of Systems Innovation, I will have the tremendous opportunity each day to catalyze shared prosperity and advance inclusive growth in our region.”

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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC INCLUSION

The Center for Economic Inclusion is dedicated exclusively to advancing inclusive growth for regional prosperity. The Center connects communities excluded by race, place, and income with cross-sector leaders to cooperatively design a new blueprint for growth that leverages market forces and our region's diversity. We elevate data-driven promising practices; advocate for inclusive policies; coordinate cross-sector, community driven-development; pilot strategies that close racial and economic gaps; and measure and collectively define progress to shape a regional economy that works for everyone. More at CenterforEconomicInclusion.org.