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Center for Economic Inclusion names new chief operating officer

SAINT PAUL, Minn. – The Center for Economic Inclusion (the Center) is pleased to welcome Christopher Romano as its new chief operating officer responsible for overseeing internal operations and developing strong and efficient internal infrastructure and systems to equip the organization to perform at the highest possible levels.

Romano has had a diverse and exemplary career in leadership positions in both the nonprofit and private sectors, most recently as the Director of Strategic Operations for Thrivent Holdings, an entrepreneurial division of Thrivent Financial, where he built the strategic governance and operations model for eight entrepreneurial business lines.

“The COO role with the Center for Economic Inclusion embodies the alignment of my work experience, professional strengths and personal passions in a way that is extremely exciting to me,” Romano said. “I truly believe the Center is poised for great impact and success and I feel blessed to be part of developing and implementing its vision for a just and equitable environment for all.”

Throughout his career, Romano has led numerous organizations working to ensure communities of color and entrepreneurs have access to economic opportunity. Prior to his tenure at Thrivent, he served as Executive Director for the Riverview Economic Development Association, developing and implementing the District del Sol Commercial Corridor Revitalization Project, a catalyst for millions of dollars in real estate, commercial and public investment in Saint Paul’s culturally diverse West Side neighborhood. He also led youth programming at La Oportunidad (Minneapolis) and served with the Peace Corps in Nicaragua as a Small Business Development Consultant.

“Chris’ operations experience, authentic approach to leadership and experience advancing racial and economic equity will advance our work in myriad of ways as we accelerate the path toward an inclusive and equitable regional economy that works for everyone,” said Tawanna Black, founder and CEO of the Center for Economic Inclusion. “I am honored to welcome Chris to our team and look forward to working with him to develop a nimble and rigorous infrastructure to support our dynamic vision.”

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Chris currently serves as chairman of the Latino Economic Development Center and is on the board of directors for Exodus Lending. He is a former Bush Fellow and was recognized as a National Society of Hispanic MBAs Fellow as well as a Sunquist Global MBA Fellow. Chris has a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Business Administration from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota.

Chris lives in southeast Minneapolis with his wife, Kerry, and their children Elena (11), Danny (9), and Joey (9).

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About the Center for Economic Inclusion

The Center for Economic Inclusion is the nation's first organization dedicated exclusively to advancing inclusive growth to achieve regional prosperity. We are a cross-sector organization committed to strengthening the Minneapolis-St. Paul region's civic infrastructure and collective capacity to disrupt systems and inclusive market forces to catalyst shared prosperity and advance an inclusive economy. www.CenterforEconomicInclusion.org