

Toward One Wisconsin Inclusivity Conference

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Media inquiries:

Deb Dorshorst

WIPPS

Mobile: 715-581-6324

debdorshorst@gmail.com

What will it take to make Wisconsin inclusive to all?

A statewide conference on April 11-12, 2019, in Milwaukee will seek answers to this question, bringing together individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds to examine the most persistent barriers to inclusion, highlight what is working now and what is promising on the horizon.

The Toward One Wisconsin Inclusivity Conference is open to all, including those from early childhood through higher education, business and industry, state and local workforce development, youth programs, health care, vocational rehabilitation, community and neighborhood associations, nonprofit, government, and faith-based groups.

Over 100 panels and presenters will highlight collaborative and innovative approaches, best practices, cutting-edge research, and success stories that focus on these four conference tracks:

- Track I: Increasing Opportunities for Inclusion in Wisconsin's Workforce
- Track II: Creating Inclusive Communities
- Track III: Raising the Next Generation of Inclusive Leaders
- Track IV: Building Health Equity in Wisconsin

Four keynote speakers have been confirmed for the two-day conference, which will be held at the Hyatt Regency, 333 West Kilbourn Avenue, in Milwaukee. Watch for an announcement soon on the fifth presenter.

- Dasha Kelly Hamilton, the conference artist-in-residence, is a nationally respected writer, performer, facilitator and creative change agent. She has performed throughout the U.S. and Canada and appeared on the final season of HBO presents Russell Simmons' "Def Poetry Jam."
- Pardeep Singh Kaleka is a former Milwaukee police officer and now a teacher and social activist. His father was one of six people killed at a shooting in 2012 at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek.
- Edward Lee Vargas, Ph.D., is a nationally recognized speaker on creating high performing school systems. He brings a wealth of highly successful multistate and international leadership experiences and accolades as superintendent of schools in several states.
- Thomas Carr Frank is an American political analyst, historian and journalist. He co-founded and edited "The Baffler" magazine and has written several books on American electoral politics and propaganda, advertising, popular culture, mainstream journalism and economics.

"While many organizations have worked hard in the past decade to create diversity, we still have much yet to accomplish to make the environment inclusive and equitable," said Eric Giordano, executive director for the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS). "What the conference aims for is to create space for cross-cutting conversations and insights into best practices in providing the same opportunities for everyone in Wisconsin."

Conference co-chairs are former Wisconsin Lieutenant Governors Rebecca Kleefisch and Barbara Lawton, Church Mutual President and CEO Rich Poirier and Marian University Senior Vice President and Ascension Wisconsin Market Board member George Koonce.

"When I was asked to serve as a co-chair for the Inclusivity Conference, I knew this was the perfect opportunity for me to be a part of a greater effort to bring together people and groups from all over the state to examine inclusivity," said Koonce, who played 10 years professionally in the NFL, eight of them in Green Bay.

"Together, we will bring our unique perspectives from many varied backgrounds and life experiences to learn how to be more inclusive and socially just in our schools, in our workplaces and in our communities," Koonce noted. "This conference is vitally important as we strive to understand and learn from the identity, culture and heritage of an ever-increasing diverse Wisconsin."

WIPPS is one of the presenting sponsors for the conference, along with Church Mutual Insurance and Ascension.

To register for the conference, go to inclusivity-wi.org/register. Registrations will be open until March 6. However, to secure a spot at the conference, early registration is welcomed.

Watch for more details on the conference coming soon, including a high school video installation contest on inclusivity that was created by University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point art and design students.