GRAND RAPIDS CHAMBER
2023 CREATE GREAT
ACTION PLAN
Dear Members, Business Leaders and Community Supporters,

At the Grand Rapids Chamber, our diverse team of subject matter experts is committed to creating a thriving and prosperous West Michigan for all.

Over the next year, the Chamber, as fierce advocates for business, will focus on the goals and outcomes outlined in the following pages to make this passion a reality.

We hope to see you and your business invest and engage in this work in 2023. The Chamber team likes to quote an opening line from Patrick Lencioni’s book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*:

“If you could get all the people in an organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time."

As members of the Chamber, you are helping to put an oar in the water as we work together to tackle problems and seize opportunities in West Michigan. Our priorities are member-set and member-driven. Together, we can make an impact as we strive to make this a great place to do business and enjoy life.

We hope you will join us in 2023. We cannot wait to see what we do together.

Rick Baker
President & CEO
Grand Rapids Chamber

Jen Crowley
Incoming Board Chair,
Grand Rapids Chamber
Owner & CMO, Highland Group
At the Grand Rapids Chamber our diverse team of subject matter experts is committed to a dynamic culture driven by our shared core values:

- **WE** believe team members who **PASSIONATELY** embrace the mission of the Grand Rapids Chamber put more of themselves into their work. We attract and retain people who are committed to high standards and **PURSUE EXCELLENCE** in every aspect of their role.

- **WE FOSTER BELONGINGNESS** by providing a space where our employees and our members feel they can bring their whole selves to authentically engage with our organization and each other.

- **WE** are committed to the highest level of service for both our internal and external customers. We proactively seek to identify potential problems before they occur and begin with a “yes” mentality to **FIND AN OPTIMAL SOLUTION**.

- **WE FOCUS ON MEMBER VALUE AND EXPERIENCE** to anticipate their needs, provide a welcoming environment where everyone feels they belong, and we listen with intent to understand.

- **WE HAVE COMPLETE ACCOUNTABILITY** for our successes and failures. We share a responsibility to be transparent, honest and act with humility.

**OUR MISSION:**
A thriving and prosperous West Michigan for all

**OUR NICHE:**
Fierce advocates for business
GRAND RAPIDS CHAMBER UNIQUES

- Strategies & resources for business growth
- Leadership & talent development for stronger organizations
- Cutting-edge diversity, equity & inclusion training and resources
- Advocacy to create an environment for business success
- A collaborative office space that is the hub of West Michigan business activity
Strategies & Resources for Business Growth

The Grand Rapids Chamber will continue to provide cutting-edge programming and services for over 2,400 members. We work to give West Michigan businesses access to the answers, the resources, and the connections they need to succeed. In 2023, we will:

• Increase member engagement and access to internal and external resources through business outreach
• Offer business growth programs to increase impact in the entrepreneurial and equitable economic development spaces
• Provide one-on-one business coaching and technical assistance while intentionally helping entrepreneurs better navigate existing services and opportunities
• Provide certifications for Minority, Women, LGBTQ+, and Veteran-Owned Businesses to increase supplier diversity
• Emphasize supplier diversity programming to create business growth opportunities, increase civic engagement and awareness of needs within the diverse-owned business community

The Center for Economic Inclusion

Businesses owned by people of color are not scaling. Less than 1% of businesses bringing in $250K or more a year are owned by a person of color. 98% of business revenue in Grand Rapids comes from white owned businesses.

Businesses need:
• Technical assistance
• Actionable growth plans
• Accessible and attractive lending
• Customers

The Center for Economic Inclusion (CEI) will provide a holistic approach to address the lived experience of entrepreneurs of color. The CEI will connect entrepreneurs to other existing services and opportunities, develop programs and services to scale, and increase the engagement of people of color across all Chamber events and programs.
2023 ACTION PLAN

Leadership & Talent Development for stronger organizations

We will continue to provide the region’s premier talent development programming, focused on three key areas: **community trusteeship, leadership skill development,** and **sense of belonging.**

- Launch a Leadership Transformation program focused on strengthening intrinsic skills and creating access and confidence in managing dialectics in leadership
- Offer a new Women in Leadership program designed to help women leaders strengthen their emotional intelligence and build strategy in conflict resolution, while equipping them with the tools to create high-performing teams
- Provide talent consultations and training, targeting specific needs across leadership levels within organizations

Cutting-edge Diversity, Equity & Inclusion training and resources

- Partner with businesses to implement inclusive practices through assessments, trainings, workshops, and learning experiences
- Consultation services to improve talent attraction, recruitment, retention and management
- Support and develop leaders fluent in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts
Advocacy to create an environment for business success

The Grand Rapids Chamber will champion the voice of West Michigan Business in Lansing and be the leading advocate for business growth at local governments across the region to create a thriving business environment.

Our top priorities include:

**A Place to Call Home**
- Building Housing Next’s coalition to increase regional housing supply at all price points, updating regional housing needs assessment, partnering with local governments to remove obstacles to housing growth and facilitating private sector investment to improve outcomes for all

**A Vibrant Business Climate Powering Our Economy**
- Supporting infrastructure to grow our economy and improve quality of life

**A Talented Michigan**
- Advocating for workforce development solutions and funding that will make Michigan a top state for talent
- Developing childcare solutions that address both access and affordability as well as recruit and retain a diverse workforce

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**Ease of Doing Business Study**

In 2023 the Grand Rapids Chamber will complete a regional “ease of doing business” study that will support the Chamber’s workplan and advance our mission by:

- Intentionally connecting with small and minority-owned businesses to inform the work of the Center for Economic Inclusion
- Creating an understanding of opportunities and challenges for businesses to inform our advocacy efforts to support a vibrant business environment
- Deepening our knowledge of employer talent needs to inform our leadership programming, DEI services and advocacy work to address the talent crisis
The Grand Rapids Chamber is expanding its member-driven, collaborative workspace. The expansion will:

- Enhance an asset for the business community and further the Chamber’s mission of creating a thriving and prosperous West Michigan for all
- Create more opportunities for members and address their changing workforce and space needs
- Support impactful programming, training and assistance to help the business community grow
- Leverage the physical environment to deliver value and opportunity to Chamber members and the community at large

Strategic communication assets

In order to best share member news and communicate the work of the Grand Rapids Chamber, in 2023 we will launch a strategic communication asset initiative. This will include:

- An overhaul of the Chamber’s website to improve functionality and enhance visitor experience
- The creation of a bi-annual printed newsletter to capture member highlights, community stories, and share the work and mission of the Chamber
The Grand Rapids Chamber hosts over 160 events and programs a year to provide structured, creative, unique opportunities for business relationships to thrive.

**SIGNATURE EVENTS:**

- 135th Annual Meeting: The State of GR Business
  - Wednesday, February 1
- Health Care & Human Resources Summit
  - Thursday, March 9
- Diversity & Talent Summit
  - Wednesday, April 26
- West Michigan CEO Summit
  - Thursday, June 15
- The Chamber Open
  - Monday, July 17
- Grand Rapids Policy Conference
  - Wednesday, August 9
- ATHENA Awards Celebration
  - Wednesday, September 20
- EPIC Awards Gala
  - Wednesday, November 8

**GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS:**

- Breakfast with Legislators
  - Mondays: January 23, March 20, May 22, September 25, October 23, & December 4
- First Friday Calls
  - Fridays: January 6, February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3 & December 1

**BUSINESS SERVICES:**

- Business Exchange Luncheon
  - Thursdays: February 9, March 2, April 13, May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 12, November 9 & December 14
- Business Growth Workshops
  - Tuesdays: February 21, April 18, May 23, September 26, October 19 & November 14
- Chamber 101
  - March 7, July 26, October 17 & December 6
- Chamber After Hours: Open House Celebration
  - Wednesday, July 26
- Chamber After Hours: Year-End Celebration
  - Wednesday, December 6
- Diversify Your Spend Business Showcase & After Hours
  - Wednesday, November 1
- West Michigan Minority Contractors After Hours
  - March 29, May 18 & October 5
- WM Minority Contractors - Supplier Diversity Golf Outing
  - Monday, June 26

**INCLUSION:**

- Diversity & Talent Webinar Series
  - Tuesdays: February 28, June 27, August 29, September 26, October 31 & November 28
- Inclusion Institute
  - May 16-17, August 15-16 & October 10
- Inclusion Institute 2.0
  - November 15-16

**TALENT DEVELOPMENT:**

- ATHENA Leadership Forums
  - Tuesdays: February 7, June 13 & November 7
- ATHENA Walking Tour
  - Wednesday, May 10
- Create Great Leaders Annual Fundraiser
  - Thursday, August 24
- Latina Connect
  - Thursday, January 26; Saturday, April 15; Tuesday, October 24
- Leadership Lesson Breakfasts
  - Wednesday, March 22 & Wednesday, November 29
- OutPro
  - Wednesdays: March 23, August 23 & October 25

**COHORT-BASED PROGRAMS:**

- Culturally Intelligent Leadership
  - Thursdays: October 5, November 2 & December 7
- ELEVATE Minority Business
  - Tuesdays: April 11, April 25, May 9, September 5, September 19 & October 3
- Emerging Leaders Series
  - Cohort 1: Tuesdays: April 5, April 19, May 3, May 17 & May 31
  - Cohort 2: Tuesdays: October 17, October 31, November 14, November 28 & December 12
- Hire for Success
  - Wednesdays: August 30, September 13, September 27, October 11, October 25 & November 8
- Inclusive Leadership
  - Wednesdays: September 6, September 20, October 4, & October 18
- Leadership Grand Rapids
  - January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20 & May 19
- Leadership Transformed
  - Cohort 1: Tuesdays: March 14, March 28, April 11, April 25, May 9, May 23, June 6 & June 20
  - Cohort 2: Thursdays: August 31, September 14, September 28, October 12, October 26, November 9, November 30 & December 14
- LeadUp
  - Cohort 1: Tuesdays: March 28, April 11, April 25, May 9, May 23 & June 6
  - Cohort 2: Tuesdays: September 12, September 26, October 10, October 24, November 7 & November 21
- Speak with Purpose
  - Cohort 1: Wednesdays: March 15, March 29, April 12, April 26 & May 10
  - Cohort 2: Tuesdays: September 5, September 19, October 3, October 17 & October 31
- Women in Leadership
  - Cohort 1: Mondays: February 13, February 27, March 13, March 27, April 10 & April 24;
  - Cohort 2: Mondays: September 11, September 25, October 9, October 23, November 6 & November 20