



# Corporate Inclusion Institute

DRIVING BUSINESS PERFORMANCE  
THROUGH INCLUSION

**Chicago United**



# The Inclusion Imperative

It's a fact that companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity see financial returns above national industry medians. But laying the groundwork for a cohesive and diverse workforce takes vision and structure. This value proposition is at the heart of the Corporate Inclusion Institute (CII).

Chicago United founded CII in 2019 to help organizations harness the power of inclusion and deliver cultural transformation. Through CII's rigorous program, corporations are improving their employee experience and retention and strengthening their ability to return value to shareholders.

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**Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is not a top-down or bottom-up practice. Rather, it is a dynamic business ethos that produces networks of innovative collaboration.**

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## Benefits of diversity on business

Companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are **35% more likely to have financial returns** above national industry medians.\*

Diverse firms have **2.3 times more cash flow** per employee.\*\*

Companies with high DEI see **45% improvement in market share** compared to peers.\*\*

Companies with high DEI have **more success** in new markets.

For every 10% increase in racial and ethnic diversity on a firm's senior-executive team, **EBIT rises 0.8%**.

An overwhelming 84% of directors say board **diversity enhances board performance**.

\* Data from McKinsey & Company

\*\* Data from The Center for Talent Innovation

## The changing American workforce

The American workforce is undergoing a cultural sea change. Today's millennials are nearing half the workforce population, with 44% of them identifying as multicultural. In addition, there are 109 counties in the United States that are majority nonwhite, and by 2042 whites will be the minority. Inclusive culture and practices give organizations an advantage in competition for top talent and the ability to adapt and thrive in shifting marketplaces. To meet this moment — and consumer demand — organizations need to transform themselves from within.

# A Game-Changing DEI Program with Tangible Impact

CII engages participants in the mission of diversity and fosters a network that speeds its adoption. Group learning and a one-on-one coaching relationship provide the knowledge, tools, and support necessary to drive performance. CII finds that:

- Exposure to multiple cultures enhances creativity.
- Varied perspectives and ideas give diverse teams **expanded problem-solving capacity**.
- Employees who feel included in organizations with high diversity support are **80% more likely** to identify their organization as high-performing.

CII's program empowers organizations by simulating on-the-job DEI training and equipping participants with proven, practical, and actionable tools to apply in real time. Structured coaching sessions reinforce these techniques, while participants are encouraged to immediately adopt its techniques to manage themselves and others in their organization. This iterative process enables organizations to develop emotional intelligence and engage deeply at all levels.



# Transforming Corporate Culture

Building a diverse and inclusive workforce is a business imperative, but getting there isn't easy. Organizations committed to DEI may find that reaching their goals are a challenge because traditional approaches fall short in workplaces with different frames of reference and communication styles. They need something more.

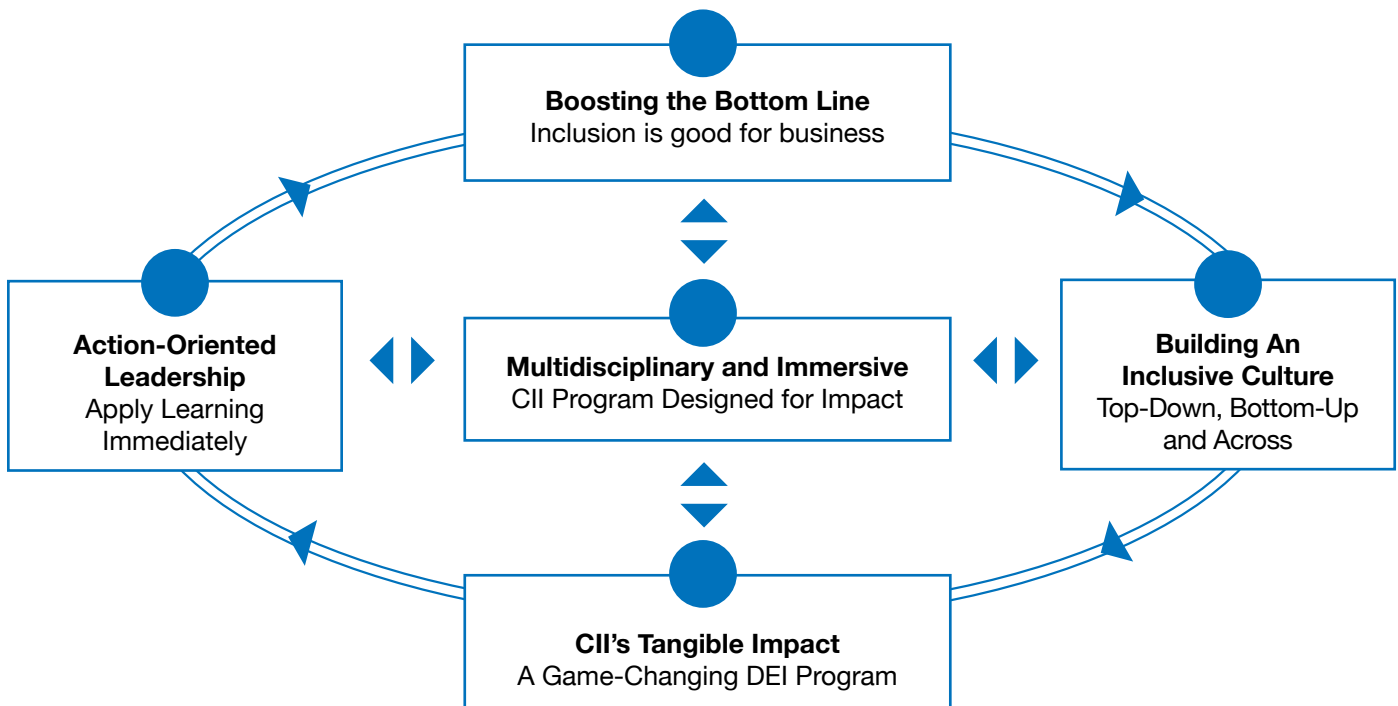
**Diversity is not a goal – it is a commitment. It takes a diverse and dedicated network to accelerate growth because continuous inclusion, like continuous improvement, is the key to driving sustained results..**

Through CII, we strive to create an organization that inspires and advances:

- **Innovative leaders** who build collaborative, results-focused teams.
- **Connected colleagues** who feel they belong and perform to their full potential.

The most productive model for change is the most inclusive. CII supports initiatives that:

- Provide different frames of reference and communication styles.
- Break down organizational silos to engage workers at all levels.
- Support diverse recruits who often start at a disadvantage because many are first in their family to attend college or first on the corporate track.
- Empower managers to become aware of their blind spots to better manage risk.
- Build a culture of trust.



# A Proven Framework to Spark Transformation from Within

## Inclusion Clusters

The Corporate Inclusion Institute model for talent development links four professionals from various levels of an organization in an “Inclusion Cluster”:

**Executive Sponsor** — an executive who has demonstrated a commitment to diversity and inclusion as well as attracting key talent. Executive sponsors lead an organization’s participants in a transformative process.

**Corporate Guide** — a mid-level manager who would benefit from tools and resources for greater cultural fluency and inclusive leadership practices. Corporate Guides learn about other parts of their own organization and acquire skills to develop high-performing teams with a culture of collaboration.

**Fellow** — a young professional who is racially or ethnically diverse (African American, Latinx, Asian, etc.). Each Fellow learns to navigate the corporate culture and contribute immediately to a purposeful organization invested in his or her success.

**Direct Manager** — a manager who directly supervises the Fellow. Each manager participates in programs that deepen his or her understanding of the Fellow’s development and the changing workforce culture.

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**As a team, the Inclusion Cluster is a powerful feedback loop that reinforces lessons learned and applies them to current business challenges.**

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Clusters transcend mentoring relationships and mark all participants as leaders committed to their organization’s transformation. An Inclusion Cluster is a support system that accelerates the leadership practices of each participant, allowing organizations to build capacity for organizational inclusion. In organizations with more than one Inclusion Cluster, the positive impact is greatly multiplied, expanding peer networks and speeding the progress of the organization’s workforce goals.



An Inclusion Cluster spreads knowledge of diversity and inclusion across an organization and shows commitment to establishing a more fully inclusive workplace.



“At a high level, CII provided me a forum to listen, share, learn, and reflect. In reality, it has shaped the foundation for how I will interface with DEI in my personal, and work life going forward.”

– Alejandro Sepulveda, Strategy Associate, LGIM America, Cohort III

## A Multidisciplinary, Immersive Approach

CII's multidisciplinary nine-month employee engagement program gives Corporate Guides and Fellows valuable insight and appreciation of diversity and inclusion. This robust, multidisciplinary program implements approaches that have been proven to [build and enhance critical thinking skills](#), [uncover preconceptions and recognize biases](#). Long-term DEI programs are [statistically proven superior](#) to point-in-time DEI trainings, which are often quickly forgotten. CII's comprehensive and carefully chosen learning opportunities put them on a path toward breakthrough experiences with lasting impact.

### Assessments

At the beginning and end of the program, Fellows and Corporate Guides participate in valuable assessments. CII administers the [Intercultural Development Inventory \(IDI\)](#), a validated 50-item measure of intercultural or cross-cultural competence used widely in business for individual and group development. Corporate Guides also take [Hogan Assessments](#) which identify characteristics that may impact job performance and a professional's fit within a particular role, team, or organizational culture.

### Academic sessions: Evidence-based instruction

Corporate Guides and Fellows participate in teaching sessions led by respected experts from leading academic institutions.

### Practical skills development

After each lecture, facilitators will engage participants in discussion and activities applying CII's principles to work settings. These highly experienced HR and DEI professionals from top organizations build confidence and inspire the program into practice.



“CII has taught me that I shouldn't be afraid to own the diverse perspective that I bring to the table and it has given me more courage to really bring my whole self to work as opposed to hiding certain aspects of my identity. Additionally, it has shown me that my organization cares about me as a diverse individual because they have allowed me the privilege to participate in CII.”

– Yusra Saad Sarhan, Sustainability and Technology Engineering Consultant, Health Care Service Corporation, Cohort II



## Experiential Workshops

All Inclusion Cluster participants engage in experiential workshops presented by a thought leader in a specific topic area, each followed by facilitated small-group discussions within their peer group to focus on how the principles apply to their organizations. Topics include:

- **Emotional Intelligence** – Bringing the whole self to work.
- **Subtleties of Inclusion and Exclusion** – Addressing microaggressions, fostering a sense of belonging.
- **Managing Change and Personal Transitions** – Leading others through organizational changes and managing one's own personal and career transitions.

## Coaching

CII's coaching structure helps put learnings into practice by facilitating powerful, two-way relationship development between the Corporate Guide and Fellow via monthly coaching sessions. Corporate Guides help Fellows identify, adapt and interpret unspoken rules and expectations of their company's unique corporate culture. Corporate Guides grow as leaders and learn about diverse colleagues' divergent experiences.

### Web-based resources for Corporate Guides:

- Inclusive talent management
- Change leadership

### Web-based courses for Fellows:

- Persuasion and influence
- Courageous conversations

“CII challenged me to get out of my comfort zone and helped me identify new areas of growth. I learned skills which will help me not only in the business world, but also in my interactions with friends, family, and more.”

– Charlotte Myland, Senior Director, Solutions, Slalom, Cohort III



## Building a Community of Inclusive Leaders

Each cohort is made up of participants coming together from various industries to cultivate across-sector networks of inclusive leaders. These networks, built across organizations, strengthen the business ecosystem, centering DEI, and provide opportunities to connect among diverse professionals.

### **Cross-company peer interaction**

Cross-industry cohorts expose participants to a range of approaches to problem solving and the collective wisdom of group discussions. Participants realize “I am not alone.”

### **Roundtable discussion**

Executive Sponsors and Direct Managers have an opportunity to connect and share their observations about CII and how they are aligning its curriculum with their organizations’ initiatives.

### **A broader civic role**

In providing a strong environment for diverse professionals to connect, learn, and support each other’s career development, CII fosters a community of innovative corporate collaboration and engagement.

“I’ve been to about 40 Chicago United events over the past three years. Our director of sales, who has served as our Direct Manager in CII has been to 10 or 15. We’re Chicago United people. We’re true believers.”

– Jack Hartman, SDI Presence LLC, Executive Sponsor, Cohorts I, II and III



# The Transformational Journey Begins Here

The business case is clear: Study after study has shown a direct positive correlation between an organization's level of diversity, equity and inclusion and its problem-solving capacity, creativity and team cohesion. The Corporate Inclusion Institute can be a major component of your DEI strategy, yielding long-lasting and far-reaching benefits to your organization.

CII is an innovative platform for bolstering cross cultural competency and achieving corporate inclusion goals. The program is equally effective in small- to medium-size firms as well as large corporations and interfaces seamlessly into leadership development or inclusion initiatives already in place.

## The Corporate Inclusion Institute is supported by:

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**Start the journey today.**

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Contact Doris Salomón  
dsalomon@chicago-united.org  
312-977-3075

“ One of the most impactful thoughts shared with us which truly summarizes my experience in CII: ‘To be a leader of people, you must ground yourself in humility and boldness. Actively seek out the challenges and face them head on. That is where true leadership resides.’”

- Judge E. Gardner, III, Director, Corporate Safety Nicor Gas, Cohort III

## Chicago United

Advancing multiracial leadership in business



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# About Chicago United

Chicago United is a corporate membership and advocacy organization whose mission is to achieve parity in economic opportunity for people of color by advancing multiracial leadership in corporate governance, executive level management, and business diversity. Founded in 1968, the organization is focused on transforming the Chicago region into the most inclusive business ecosystem in the nation by engaging the top publicly and privately held corporations in leading talent management and inclusive diversity practices. Chicago United's signature programs include its Business Leaders of Color publication, which showcases a diverse pool of corporate director candidates, the Five Forward Initiative™, designed to invigorate job creation in communities of color by increasing the scale of large Minority Business Enterprises in the Chicago region, Inside Inclusion featuring the Corporate Diversity Profile, and the Corporate Inclusion Institute, the first-ever citywide business talent development program. [www.chicago-united.org](http://www.chicago-united.org)

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## Contact Us



312-977-3060

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[www.chicago-united.org](http://www.chicago-united.org)

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Chicago United  
300 East Randolph Street  
Suite CL920  
Chicago, IL 60601-5075

