



## **GBCVB TO HOST TOWN HALL AND CAREER FAIR AS PART OF APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM WITH TOURISM DIVERSITY MATTERS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau (GBCVB) is hosting a Town Hall and inaugural Career Fair at the Boston University (BU) School of Hospitality Administration on May 31. The event is a collaborative effort between the GBCVB and Tourism Diversity Matters (TDM) and serves as a kickoff to an Apprenticeship Program that the two organizations will jointly cultivate and oversee. The goal of the program is to diversify the travel and hospitality industry through robust workforce development initiatives that emphasize the importance of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; ultimately, these objectives aim to furnish an equitable pipeline for upper management and executive-level positions for diverse candidates to excel in the travel and hospitality sector.

"Our industry suffers from significant disparities as it relates to upper management positions compared to the main body of the hospitality workforce," said Martha J. Sheridan, President & CEO of the GBCVB. "To be clear, we have tremendous respect for the entire workforce. They represent the backbone of the travel sector, but we must do better in creating pipelines for upward mobility and opportunity. Tourism Diversity Matters represents a critical collaboration for us."

TDM is a key strategic partner for the GBCVB to realize a more diverse leadership spectrum across the Greater Boston travel sector. TDM was launched in February 2021 with founding partners ConferenceDirect Foundation, Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB), and SearchWide Global and has since become aligned with organizations such as the U.S. Travel Association in a collective effort to build equitable models for workforce development. TDM has also partnered with hospitality management programs at Temple University and San Diego State University.

“Tourism Diversity Matters aims to affiliate with industry partners such as the GBCVB to develop diversity, equity, and inclusion solutions that will benefit the tourism, hospitality, and events sector,” said Greg DeShields, Executive Director of Tourism Diversity Matters. “We are building a collaborative model with the U.S. Travel Association that is now being championed in Boston. The GBCVB is essentially pioneering the formula for change that Tourism Diversity Matters, SearchWide Global, and the U.S. Travel Association have come to endorse.”

The Town Hall forum on May 31 will feature leaders from the GBCVB, TDM, Temple University, Boston University, and the City of Boston. GBCVB Executive Vice President Hilina D. Ajakaiye, who co-chairs Destination International's Committee on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, is leading this collaboration with TDM while also spearheading an array of conversations around DE&I, accessibility and sustainability. **Interested participants can register [here](#).**

“This work is paramount; it represents the future of this industry and how we put a stake in the ground to say that this sector can do better and that we will,” said Ajakaiye. “While we are incredibly proud to be the first destination to embrace and put into practice the TDM-US Travel model, we know that this is just the beginning. We are all in and hope to create an example for other destinations to emulate.”

### **About GBCVB:**

The Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau (GBCVB) is the official sales, marketing and visitor services organization charged with the development of meetings, conventions and tourism-related business to enhance the economy of Boston, Cambridge and the metropolitan area.

The GBCVB is a not-for-profit, membership-driven sales and marketing organization comprised of over 900 member companies across New England that depend on the visitor economy for their own success and growth.

GBCVB members benefit from the Bureau's vast network of B2B and B2C connections. We offer our members numerous opportunities to reach convention groups and visitors, while helping them to foster fruitful relationships with other GBCVB member companies.

### **About Tourism Diversity Matters:**

Tourism Diversity Matters (TDM) was founded as the collaborative leader of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in the tourism and events industry. Through a collective impact approach, the organization is committed to addressing the gaps of ethnic disparities providing leaders in the tourism and events industry access, resources, and tactics to develop more effective Diversity & Inclusion strategies that will engage and retain a diverse workforce.

TDM focuses on four primary pillars of activity to benefit the Tourism Industry: Apprenticeships, Workforce Development, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, Research and Data.

TDM aims to sustain and expand its platform by affiliating with fellow industry partners and notable research institutions, creating solutions that can be implemented, and contributing to organizational success.

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