



PRESS RELEASE
October 29, 2020

Contact:
Casey Baines, cbaines@bostonchamber.com

Greater Boston Chamber & Boston While Black Announce Partnership

The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce announces a partnership today with [Boston While Black](#) (“BWB”), a new membership network for Black professionals, entrepreneurs, & graduate students, founded by Sheena Collier. Through a virtual platform and customized programming, BWB serves both Black Bostonians and those who have relocated here seeking access to mentors and leaders who they can relate to, providing curated social experiences, resources on how to navigate the city through a cultural lens, and a tribe of supportive friends. BWB is building a social infrastructure that will catapult the region in attracting & retaining more Black talent and redefining the brand of Boston.

The Chamber is joining BWB as a “Founding Accomplice” level partner, which includes sponsorship of BWB public and members-only events as well as annual memberships for Black entrepreneurs who are part of the Chamber’s membership. This partnership also includes designated spots for Boston While Black members in Chamber leadership initiatives, including Boston’s Future Leaders and Women’s Leadership program. The Chamber and Boston While Black will continue their successful partnership during the Fierce Urgency of Now festival for young professionals of color. The Chamber’s investment in Boston While Black’s mission will benefit the Chamber programming, leadership initiatives and the greater business community.

“We’re proud to announce the Chamber’s new investment in Boston While Black. This partnership is going to benefit both organizations, and most importantly Boston, as we work to change the perception and reality of living in Boston as a Black professional. The Boston business community needs to recognize and take action to make sure that we’re attracting and retaining Black talent for our collective future,” said James E. Rooney, President & CEO, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce.

Boston While Black creates a supportive community in a city known to be unwelcoming to Black students, professionals, and entrepreneurs. Without networks of peers and mentors to help navigate professional and social networks, Boston cannot attract and retain Black talent in the region. The partnership with Boston While Black is part of the Chamber’s commitment to create a business community that values and elevates Black voices and contributions. While Boston is known to be an unwelcoming city to Black

students and professionals, the Chamber knows that Boston While Black is the key to transforming the perception and reality of the region.

Sheena Collier, founder of Boston While Black and Chamber Board member, has extensive experience in cultivating community and powerful events. During her time as Director of Economic Opportunity at the Chamber, Sheena built the Fierce Urgency of Now annual festival dedicated to amplifying the experiences and challenges of young professionals of color in Boston. Sheena also led the early stage development of the Pacesetters, the Chamber's program dedicated to transforming corporate procurement into an equity tool.

“When I moved to Boston to attend Harvard, I didn't feel a sense of belonging. I'm not alone in this experience. Whether you grow up in the area or relocate for school or work, Boston presents a difficult reality for Black professionals. We're changing that reality with Boston While Black by building a strong community, giving Black students and professionals a reason to stay and thrive. We're looking forward to the partnership with the Chamber and its visionary leader Jim Rooney, to showcase what is possible when the business community invests in Black talent,” said Sheena Collier, Founder of Boston While Black and the CEO of The Collier Connection.

About Boston While Black

Boston While Black is a membership network for Black professionals, entrepreneurs, and graduate students – native or new to Boston – who are seeking a thriving and connected community. Through programs, events, and a virtual platform, members connect to mentors and leaders who they can relate to, curated social experiences, resources on how to navigate the city through a cultural lens, and a tribe of supportive friends. The Boston While Black community is powered by the experiences of the creator, Sheena Collier, who moved here fifteen years ago to attend Harvard and had her own challenges navigating Boston, particularly as a Black woman. Learn more at bostonwhileblack.com.

About the Greater Boston Chamber

We are the convener, voice and advocate of our region's business community, committed to making Greater Boston the best place for all businesses and all people to thrive. We help our members and Greater Boston succeed by convening and connecting the business community; researching, developing and advocating for public policies that contribute to our region's economic success; and providing comprehensive leadership development programs designed to grow strong business and civic leaders. Learn more at BostonChamber.com.