



PRESS RELEASE

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Greater Boston Chamber & City Awake Announce 2021 Fierce Urgency of Now Festival

Featuring Heather McGhee, Author & Advocate, and
Kahlil Greene, Speaker and Racial Equity Leader

BOSTON, MA- The [Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce](#) (GBCC) and [City Awake](#) are pleased to announce the fourth annual [Fierce Urgency of Now Festival](#), a four day festival that convenes diverse young professionals together with their peers, business leaders, and organizations to build connection, advance careers, and ignite positive change. This year, the festival will feature more than 30 virtual and in-person events hosted by a variety of organizations and companies from September 15 through September 18.

In 2018, the GBCC and City Awake launched the first Fierce Urgency of Now festival to highlight the voices of the next generation and to inspire action. The title, “Fierce Urgency of Now,” is attributed to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech: “We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.”

As the most recent national reckoning on systemic racism continues today, the Greater Boston region and the business community have a responsibility in transforming inequities into opportunity and abundance. The festival’s opening event on September 15 features [Heather McGhee](#), prominent advocate and author of “[The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together](#).” On September 16, Kahlil Greene, renowned racial equity speaker and writer, will discuss the most recent racial reckoning and his experience as Yale University’s first Black student body president. In addition to our powerful keynote speakers, the festival also includes workshops, workouts, day parties, and panel discussions.

James E. Rooney, the President and CEO of the GBCC, describes the significance and impact of The Fierce Urgency of Now festival. “The fourth year of the festival presents the opportunity to be even bolder in the pursuit of equity and successfully connecting communities – this year we have more events happening both virtually and in-person throughout many Boston neighborhoods. A festival of this magnitude drives the purpose of City Awake forward. Every day, we hear about the reputation and reality of living in Greater Boston, and the festival can help us build a new, vibrant region together.”

“The Fierce Urgency of Now Festival is a dynamic platform that connects young professionals and amplifies the voices of people of color throughout Boston. Gillette is proud to be a partner in this festival and City Awake’s mission to inspire the next generation in Boston,” said Gary Coombe, CEO, P&G Gillette.

“The Fierce Urgency of Now festival convenes and connects communities throughout Greater Boston to increase belonging, and I’m excited that the festival will return for a fourth year, building on the success of earlier gatherings. The Barr Foundation is proud to support this work to create the Boston of the

future – a city that is more inclusive, allowing everyone to thrive,” said Kalila Barnett, Barr’s Program Officer for Climate Resilience.

“It is exciting to see The Fierce Urgency of Now festival grow in impact and scope, and I’m looking forward to another year of making game-changing connections with leaders of color throughout Greater Boston. On behalf of Accenture, I’m proud of the critical work that we are doing to make Boston more welcoming for young professionals of color,” said Rutba Shivani, Operations Lead at Accenture and City Awake Advisory Board Member.

The hybrid in-person and virtual 2021 Fierce Urgency of Now festival is supported by many, including Presenting Sponsors the Barr Foundation, John Hancock, and P&G Gillette; and Platinum sponsor T.D. Bank.

About City Awake

City Awake empowers the next generation of Greater Boston leaders through programming that builds community and engages young professionals in dialogue about the most pressing issues facing our region. Through this work, we hope to deepen their connections to the broader business and civic communities and recognize their important contributions to our thriving economy. Learn more at CityAwake.org.

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.