

Community Building Initiative
601 E. 5th St, Suite 460
Charlotte, NC 28202
Press Contact: Megan Jones
mjones@cbicharlotte.org
(703) 861-8059



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Building Initiative Executive Director Dianne English to Retire

CHARLOTTE, NC (November 17, 2021) – Community Building Initiative (CBI) Founding Executive Director Dianne English announced earlier this year that she will retire at the end of 2021 after 24 years of service.



“The people of CBI have enriched my life beyond measure, and the work has allowed me to find a place of service within this community,” said English in a letter to stakeholders. “With deep gratitude for the opportunity to be part of challenging, transformational and spirit-filled work, I know that now is the time for me to step aside.”

Ms. English came to what was then the Community Building Task Force in 1997 when it was established by government and civic leaders to promote racial and ethnic inclusion in response to a crisis after a set of police-involved shootings of unarmed Black people. Dianne’s work on behalf of CBI and its mission has been tireless ever since.

“On behalf of all the members of the Board of Directors of CBI – past and present – who have had the pleasure of working with Dianne and her team, we celebrate her long-standing tradition of servant leadership,” says Rick McDermott, Chair of CBI’s Board of Directors. “She has led CBI from its beginning as a short-term task force to its current status as a mature and dynamic organization. Although we will miss her vision, her energy, and her humor, we remain committed to and will continue working toward CBI’s mission of a more equitable and just Charlotte-Mecklenburg.”

The CBI Board of Directors has established a search committee, chaired by former CBI Board Chair Byron Hawkins. In addition to Byron, the search committee comprises current CBI board members Ray Feaster and Rick McDermott and former CBI board members Bishop Claude Alexander, Jenni Gaisbauer, and Jenny Ward. The search committee and the CBI Board of Directors have selected Elinvar Leadership Solutions to support the executive search and to ensure a smooth transition. “These will surely be the proverbial big shoes to fill,” said Hawkins, “but, with the leadership of the search committee, which includes both long-term and contemporary volunteer leaders, and the CBI Board of Directors, we know we will identify the right leader to continue the important work that Dianne has supported since CBI was founded.”

CBI engages about 2500 people each year in a range of programs designed to equip people and organizations with the knowledge, skills, and courage to fight bias, remove barriers to opportunity, and to build a more equitable and just Charlotte-Mecklenburg. CBI’s largest scale program is its annual Stakeholders Breakfast. CBI’s 2021 Stakeholders Breakfast will be held virtually on Friday, December 3, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. This year’s program – entitled “Reckoning with Aftershocks – how do we recommit, reconnect, and rebuild?” – will feature a conversation with renowned writer, poet, and scholar Clint Smith. Interested members of the community are invited to register at cbicharlotte.org by November 18th.

Community Building Initiative (CBI)’s mission is to *give people and organizations the knowledge, skills and courage to fight bias, remove barriers to opportunity, and build a more equitable and just Charlotte-Mecklenburg.* CBI envisions a *connected community where everyone wakes up to discrimination and injustice, interrupts inequitable systems and structures, and steps up to champion rights, access and opportunity.*

While originally founded to focus on matters of race and ethnicity, in 2011, after two years of thoughtful deliberations, CBI leadership expanded its work to include other aspects of diversity such as gender, religion, sexual orientation and socio-economic class/economic status.

CBI programming serves three strategic purposes: **DEVELOPING LEADERS**, including LDI (Leadership Development Initiative) and LU40 (Leaders Under 40); **CONNECTING COMMUNITY**, including events and outreach such as the annual Stakeholders Breakfast, interactive Bus Tours and Community Dialogues; and **ADVANCING EQUITY**, including Equity Impact Circles. More information about CBI’s programming can be found at cbicharlotte.org.

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