



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ANCA and ADI Offer Free Workshop on Welcoming and Belonging in the Workplace

Businesses and nonprofits invited to build communication skills for economic success

SARANAC LAKE, N.Y. — Small business and nonprofit personnel are invited to develop communication skills that will help them retain employees and support positive customer experiences at a free workshop presented by the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) and the Adirondack Diversity Initiative (ADI) in partnership with the Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce (SLACC).

“Building Welcoming & Belonging in the Workplace” will take place on Monday, September 19, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at the Dewey Mountain Recreation Center in Saranac Lake, N.Y. All small business owners, employees, aspiring entrepreneurs and nonprofit personnel in ANCA’s service region are invited to attend. Registration is open at adirondack.org/welcomingworkshop.

“To create joyful spaces where people want to work and gather, we have to practice communicating with empathy and better stating our needs,” said ADI Scholar Activist David Epstein-HaLevi. “This workshop will give participants a supported environment where they can develop skills to make their business more welcoming to potential colleagues and a wider customer audience.”

Epstein-HaLevi will lead workshop participants through activities and conversations designed to teach skills and methods for communicating needs, requests, boundaries and emotions in a nonviolent way.

The workshop builds on other events offered by the Adirondack Diversity Initiative, a program of ANCA, that promote awareness around equity and inclusion in the workplace. In April 2022, ADI’s *Communicating for Change Summit* at Paul Smith’s College VIC convened local educators and leaders to gain knowledge and skills for facilitating nonviolent communication.

Principles of welcoming and belonging were also central to ADI and SLACC’s planning of Saranac Lake’s inaugural First Friday, which took place on September 2, 2022. The event featured 27 local businesses and organizations who provided opportunities for residents, visitors and college students to share a positive downtown experience.

“I’ve always felt welcome in this area, and it’s hard for me to hear that some people don’t,” said Victoria Vazquez, owner of Main Street Exchange, a consignment shop that helps organize Saranac Lake’s First Fridays. “I try to be as warm and inviting as possible so that people feel they can come in and be themselves in the store. If it takes extra time or effort for me to figure out how to do that, it’s worth it to me because it benefits our whole community.”

This workshop is supported by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration and the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, which awarded ANCA’s Center for Pandemic Response (ANCA CPR) \$1.268 million in May 2021 to help regional small businesses and organizations achieve stability, resilience and growth. ANCA CPR offers small business and nonprofit clients technical assistance through free and low-cost programs.

To learn more about the September 19 workshop or to register, visit adironack.org/welcomingworkshop or contact ANCA CPR Program Navigator Olivia Dwyer at odwyer@adironack.org or 518.891.6200.

[ANCA](#) is an independent, nonprofit corporation with a transformational approach to building prosperity across northern New York. Using innovative strategies for food systems, clean energy, small businesses, and equity and inclusion, ANCA delivers targeted interventions that create and sustain wealth and value in local communities.

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