



Vivian Balonos  
First Bank

## Pillars of Action-- D&I Training & Education

The NCBA DEI Council is full of dedicated individuals who place DE&I at the top of their list when it comes to priorities a company should focus on. To continue the series of introductions related to the remarkable council members, we introduce Vivian Bolanos of First Bank.

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### **Tell us a little about yourself..**

I was born and raised in Cuenca – Ecuador. In 1992, during high school I got the chance to visit Texas as an exchange student and realized my opportunities would be greater in America. I kept in close contact with my host family and was able to move to the United States, settling in Henderson County in 2000. I attended law school at the University Estatal of Cuenca in Ecuador.

My career started at Roper Insurance Agency and as a GED instructor for Spanish-speaking students at Blue Ridge Community College. Today, I serve as VP Business Development Officer for First Bank, where I develop business relationships in the Henderson, Transylvania and Buncombe County banking centers and markets.

Along the way, I have become a committed community advocate and volunteer, I currently serve as a Board Member for Pardee UNC Health Care, Blue Ridge Community College and Dogwood Health Trust.

### **What does diversity, equity, and inclusion mean to you and why is it important?**

DEI is an opportunity for individuals and organizations to look for new possibilities and expect different results by giving a chance to different points of view, perspectives in order to have outcomes that are more in balance and accessible for all, regardless of the race, color, age, gender, disabilities, etc.

It is so important to me because I am an immigrant living in a different country, experiencing first source the inequalities of a culture or a system that has not changed in years.

### **Why did you join the NCBA DEI council?**

I felt very privileged to be nominated by First Bank to join the council because of my commitment to inclusion and equity. DE&I is more than race and color. The council gives me the chance to be a voice and talk about age, gender pay disparity, disability, etc., along with the inequities we currently see in the work place. This council is helping look through the lenses of fairness by casting a wider net and identifying the voices that are missing.