

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission Meeting
 July 20, 2023, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
 Cuyahoga County Administrative Building – Room 5-006
 2079 East Ninth Street, 4th Floor
 Cleveland, OH 44115

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission		
Last Name	First Name	Agency
Lockett	Lenora	Equity & Inclusion
Merriman	David	Health and Human Services
Nemastil	Sarah	Human Resources
Smialek	Jill	Public Safety and Justice Services
Guests		
Gallagher	Katherine	County Executive
Kopcienski	Rebecca	Personnel Review Commission
Murdock	Jamillah	Equity & Inclusion
Slayton	Shaunna	Equity & Inclusion

- I. Welcome

- II. Call to Order (10:02 am) – David Merriman, Chairman
 1. Roll call completed and quorum confirmed.
 2. Call for Review & Approval of Minutes made by David Merriman.
 - Minutes approved: Motion to approve made by Jill Smialek, seconded by Sarah Nemastil.

- III. Public Comment
 - There was no public comment.

- IV. Opening Remarks from Equity Commission Members
 1. Jill Smialek – The Public Safety and Justice department is looking at budget items and planning for spending for the next year. Their department has made a commitment to incorporate the equity zones into decision making. There are several Public Safety grant opportunities where their department will be able to provide direct assistance to communities that incorporate the Equity zones into the community process. The department is excited about the addition to their decision-making process. She believes it will be helpful.
 2. Sarah Nemastil – She is still settling into her new role as Director of Human Resources. The primary focus is learning more about HR and their own DEI initiatives. Looking at HR policy with an equity lens. Advancing their initiatives in the County and planning to sit with Lenora (DEI) to see how they can work together and get those initiatives done.

3. Lenora Lockett – DEI recently held its Mid-Year Equity on June 15, 2023. The Welcome address was given by Council President, Pernell Jones. Cuyahoga County Executive, Chris Ronayne, provided key-opening remarks. More than 50 executive leaders, directors, and managers were in attendance. DEI also held its first Vendor Pitch Day and fair on July 13, 2023. This event was made possible due to the collaboration of several departments, including Purchasing, Communications, Health and Human Services, and Human Resources. The Communications department did an excellent job advertising through social media, interactive boards within buildings, and flyers. There were more than 100 attendees representing 100 vendors. The event was well received based on feedback received. The partnership between departments demonstrated the impact when we all work together to promote equity initiatives to increase our impact.
 4. David Merriman – An in-person hiring event for Child Support workers was held on July 20, 2023. These types of events have become a great sign of good government. From a county perspective, the ability to rapidly hire, is the backbone of our organization and the work we do. An RFP will be released later this week for a Child Wellness campus. The campus will better serve children in our custody that need specialty services. Any Community groups that have approached us and expressed interest, were referred to Vendor Pitch Day and fair. Pitch Day was an excellent opportunity to give potential vendors the opportunity to be considered and heard.
 5. Guest introductions – Katherine Gallagher (Executive Office), Shaunna Slayton (DEI), and Jamillah Murdock (DEI).
- V. HR's "Your Vote, Your Voice" Event
1. Sarah Nemastil – HR's DEI event "Your Vote, Your Voice" was hosted on June 30, 2023. The event is part of the series "Can We Talk: Conversations That Matter". The meeting spoke to the importance of voting and the upcoming Special Election that was held on August 8, 2023, for Issue 1. The panel included Councilwoman Meredith Turner from District 9, Meredith Hellmer, President of the Board of Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates, and Mike West, Board of Elections Manager of Community Outreach. This event highlighted some of the changes in the rules that have occurred in light of this upcoming election and because of the issue at hand, it is important that we do our best to get the information out to the community. Voter support is an important part of our charter that is included as a necessary function of this County government. Thanks to HR DEI team for putting the event together. The event can be viewed on the County's YouTube page at the following link: [Can We Talk: Conversations That Matter- Your Vote, Your Voice - YouTube](#).
- VI. Personnel Review Commission (PRC) – Equity Initiatives
1. Rebecca Kopcienski PRC – The PRC 's fundamental obligation in Cuyahoga County government is to ensure an employment system based on merit and fitness with

decisions based on qualifications and performance. Not some of the other things that used to drive employment decisions at the County before the reorganization of the County many years ago. Under the charter, there are four (4) general responsibilities: hear appeals, compliance audits, administration of classification and compensation systems for classified employees, and civil service testing. The last two are highlighted because that's where a lot of the DEI initiatives are hovering around. The PRC acts as a 'Gatekeeper' for County employment. At each point in the process we know that people get screened out within the process. The PRC is committed to reviewing these actions and functions to ensure that they are equitable and free of discrimination. Through the end of this year and into next year, there are four (4) initiatives that will be focused on: Goal 1 – Reduce bias in job documents that may contain language-based bias and language that can influence different groups. Research shows that if you remove bias some of those coded words are taken out of your job documents you can boost applications which of course would be a bonus. Goal 2 & 3 - Reviewing other requirements: driver's license review and license/certification requirements. Not having a license can disproportionately affect applicants. We know that sometimes disabled people are reluctant to apply for jobs where it says that driver's license might be required. We also know that foreign born citizens sometimes encounter more challenges to get a driver's license. They can be adversely affected by that requirement. It is also known that applicants with revoked licenses for past offenses are more likely to be in a protected class. Questions are being asked within departments if a driver's license is necessary or can the job be done without it. We are currently working to remove this barrier to employment where we can. Regarding certification requirements, the PRC has held discussions over the past year with employers who are doing a full-scale degree reset where they are eliminating degree requirements in their jobs across the board. Goal 4 – "Reformatting" of minimum qualifications: Minimum qualifications are included in our classification specifications as a statement that lays out what's the required in education and experience for a job and this is what is used to determine who can take a civil service exam. The PRC testing team is working with subject matter experts and the hiring managers to develop equivalencies for people who don't have the specific minimum qualifications to determine what other combinations of education and experience can be used instead. By updating the information, we anticipate more people will be encouraged to apply as this aligns well with the DEI initiatives.

VII. Closing Remarks

1. Lenora Lockett – DEI is working on a continuation of Vendor Pitch Day which was held on July 13, 2023. Our department will be hosting a Vendor Assistance hour that will be held the fourth Thursday of each month from 10:00am to 11:00am.

During the webinars, vendors will have the opportunity to ask questions or get assistance with forms and enrollment in the County systems. We are working with TRI-C to complete the setup of makeup sessions for last year's Town Hall sessions. We anticipate the schedule to be released early September.

2. Jill Smialek – The Public Safety and Justice department is hosting the 5th Annual Camp Hope which will host 40 kids for five nights. This event is for children who have been exposed to violence and we know that violence disproportionately impacts communities of color. Thursday, July 27th, we will have police and fire departments from various communities across the county coming out to interact with the kids.
3. David Merriman – Health and Human Services is hosting a Family Fun Day on August 1st at Public Square. The public will also be invited to come and get backpacks with school supplies and more information is available on our website on those events. This is a reoccurring annual event and we're very excited to see the public commit to engagement with staff and local resources. July 18th was a milestone for us, I believe, in our County by electing the County's first Hispanic sheriff. We all recognize the critical role of the Sheriff and how difficult that job is. It's wonderful for us to have a veteran leader like Sheriff Pretel who has stepped forward and is taking on this responsibility. Soon, we will invite him to one of our meetings and give him an opportunity to hear from us and what we're working on. We'd also like to hear from him some of his ideas. We'll look to reach out after the first quarter to give him time to get up to speed. Lastly, I want to call out and acknowledge our County Executive Chris Roynane for finding a candidate of Sheriff Pretel's caliber and for County Council for their commitment and support in appointing him to that very important position.

VIII. Adjourn

1. Meeting adjourned at 10:47am

Next Scheduled Meeting: September 21, 2023 @ 10:00am