

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission Meeting

January 19, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Cuyahoga County Administrative Building – Committee Room B

2079 East Ninth Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Cleveland, OH 44115

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission		
Last Name	First Name	Agency
Lockett	Lenora	Equity & Inclusion
Johnson	Vaughn	Development
Marshall	Sheba	Human Resources
Merriman	David	Health and Human Services
Guests		
Assad	Awatef	Risk Management
Miller	Adam	Equity & Inclusion

- I. Welcome
- II. Call to Order (10:05 am) – Director, David Merriman
  - a. Review & Approval of Minutes
    - Motion to approve made by Director Merriman, seconded by Deputy Director Johnson, minutes approved.
- III. Public Comment
  - There was no public comment.
- IV. Opening Remarks from Equity Commission Members
  - i. Director Lockett stated she was excited about upcoming work for 2022. Deferred additional comments until later, as topics addressed during meeting agenda.
  - ii. Interim Director Marshall also excited about upcoming work in 2022 and what HR will contribute towards topics of equity and inclusion.
  - iii. Deputy Director Johnson expressed agreement about equity and inclusion work in 2022. One thousand (1,000) letters were sent out to the Central Neighborhood district, which was directed towards minority owned/small businesses, and included information on the SkillUp Program. Deputy Director Johnson also spoke on the beginning stages of a collaboration with Destination Cleveland which will bring two (2) minority focused conferences: The African American Credit Union

Coalition and the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions. Director Merriman requested clarification on if these conferences were to be virtual or in-person. Deputy Director Johnson stated that these conferences were to be held in-person with a possible earliest date occurring in 2024. A part of this engagement includes a mentorship program which works with historically black universities/colleges. Deputy Director Johnson stated that preliminary discussions have started with credit union executives who are interested in establishing branch locations in East Cleveland as well as the Central Neighborhood, specifically Arbor Park. Discussions have also taken place with Director Lockett on the possibility of having joint staff meetings between Development and Department of Equity and Inclusion to get a better understanding of the work that each area does. He also stated that partnerships have been established with the Minority Business Assistance Center to present work that is being done in the County. Development is continuing work regarding topics of equity and inclusion, which would include conversations with senior leadership in other departments.

- iv. Director Merriman spoke on his excitement of the work that has been ongoing regarding the HHS internal report.

#### V. Employee Sponsorship Program

- i. Ms. Awatef Assad of the County Law Department presented information on the proposed Cuyahoga County Employee Sponsorship Program. Ms. Assad is the Risk Manager for Cuyahoga County, and also serves as the Vice-President of Inclusion and Diversity for the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, as well a Co-Chair for Women in Law (slide presentation included as attachment to these meeting minutes).
- ii. Interim Director Marshall inquired how would this program work with succession planning programs. Ms. Awatef replied that she believed that these two programs would complement each other and could encompass each other, or a stand-alone program.
- iii. Director Lockett stated that she was very excited about the opportunity to investigate how the County could include the program in the equity initiatives. She went on to state that it was vital to ensure that everyone feels included and that there are opportunities to make sure the demographics are reflective of being diverse. Director Lockett spoke on the possibility of conducting a leadership training, which may also align with succession planning and nurture talent within the County.
- iv. Deputy Director Johnson spoke on the lack of diversity and inclusion in the banking industry. He spoke on the benefits of leadership training programs and how they can be pipelines for highly trained individuals

that can take over in leadership positions. Deputy Director Johnson ended stating that he was excited to see where this program can go.

- v. Director Merriman asked about, how as an organization would the County document a rite of succession and be viewed as being justifiable in a civil service environment where there is testing and having open access in the application process. He went on to ask Ms. Awatef if she would be willing to make a similar presentation to the Equity Commission Working Group. Ms. Awatef stated that she would be happy to meet with this group. A list of dates will be sent to determine the best time to conduct a presentation.

#### VI. Racial Equity Training

- i. Director Lockett spoke on the directive to have Racial Equity and Inclusion Training for County staff and leadership. Of the three (3) proposals that were submitted in April of 2021, Tri-C was the recommended vendor. On January 10, 2022, the contract was approved by the Board of Control. HR and DEI are serving as the leads on the County side and a series of meetings have been created with Tri-C to handle the administration of the project. The overall scope will be training 4,500 employees that are under the direction of the County Executive, management training for the 700 leaders and managers, and executive coaching training 32 top level executives/directors.
- ii. The first phase of this process will be the stakeholder analysis. Management will be trained first on what staff will be trained on, as well as how to embed equity in their operations. Part of the stakeholder analysis is to have five (5) focus groups with five (5) to ten (10) individuals as part of each group. These focus groups will determine if there are unique issues/areas in the County so training can emphasize/address areas of concern. This first stage of process should occur between February and March and the executive coaching portion will start in April or early May.
- iii. Director Merriman recommended to continue to have conversations with Communications about the program, to inform all involved of the process and timeline of the training.

#### VII. 2022 Equity Commission Objectives

- i. Director Lockett spoke on the importance of having conversations about overarching programs and the direction these programs need to take. She also spoke on the need to progress from the five (5) pilot programs and one (1) board towards the full tranche of departments to further improve equity throughout the County.

- ii. Director Merriman stated that he believes it is important to include all departments to establish expectations and plans. Director Merriman asked for clarification on how these programs would move forward and if the Equity Commission would be developing these discussions or if it would fall to the working group. Director Lockett stated that it would be a mix of both entities, as the Equity Commission will provide the ultimate direction. Director Merriman closed with stating that now is the perfect time to set the agenda for the future as it will present a variety of opportunities for the next administration.

VIII. Discussion on Equity Report

- i. County Code requires a distribution by January 31 for the completed report to be posted. Director Lockett stated that work has been done with Tyler Sinclair in the Communications Department for developing a template going forward. The report will be fine tuned the following week to allow for clarity for all audiences. Director Merriman stated that the HHS Communications team is also available to review report if needed.

IX. Closing Remarks

- i. Deputy Director Vaughn Johnson stated that he is excited for the upcoming work to be done in 2022.
- ii. Interim Director Marshall seconded these same thoughts.
- iii. Director Lockett stated that she is excited about the work being done and that a good foundation for future work has been set.
- iv. Director Merriman wished to recognize that significant work and growth have been made with the Equity Commission. There are a variety of community priorities such as: hiring of social workers and corrections officers; ongoing COVID-19 concerns; and systemic racism.

X. Adjourn (10:56 am)

*Next Scheduled Meeting: March 17, 2022 @ 10:00am*

# PROPOSED CUYAHOGA COUNTY EMPLOYEE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Awatef Assad, Esq.  
Risk Manager  
January 20, 2022

## Equity & Inclusion Barriers

- ▶ ‘Growing body of Evidence that Diversity programs don’t work.’ *Harvard Business Review*
- ▶ Women make up only 24% of senior management roles and a 3% of Fortune 500 CEOs
- ▶ Diversity and Inclusion programs do not actively facilitate leadership and promotion pathways.
  - ▶ Affinity and Implicit Biases
- ▶ *McKinsey Report* - supports business case for inclusion and equity based on data analytics.
- ▶ **Leadership is Key:** SEC adopted a Rule requiring Nasdaq-listed companies to have Diverse Board Representation (at least one Female and at least one director must self-identify as an Underrepresented Minority and/or LGBTQ+).

## BUILDING A MORE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE WORKPLACE (Sponsorship -- What is it?)

- ▶ “Valuable Tool for increasing diversity in an organization’s senior ranks by promoting employees from underrepresented groups into senior positions.” HBR
- ▶ “A strategic professional relationship forged between an ambitious high performer (protégé or sponsee) and a more senior executive (sponsor or steward) which leads to positive career traction for both.” *Culture at Work*.
- ▶ Equal representation in Top Leadership Positions
  - ▶ Retention > Creating a High-Talent Pipeline
- ▶ Sponsorship is not Mentorship

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## SPONSORS

- ▶ Drive career advancement, personal development and provide more impact than mentors because they advocate and have stake in an underrepresented employee’s success.
- ▶ Hold Senior level positions who identify or are assigned to proteges
- ▶ Help sponsee develop a stronger voice and influence within a company
- ▶ Increase and Promote Visibility
- ▶ Shares valuable insight
- ▶ Makes meaningful introductions to Senior Leaders
- ▶ Advocate for next opportunity or promotion

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## SPONSEE/PROTEGE

- ▶ High-potential Employee, Professionals, High-achievers and Performers
- ▶ Enables protégées with career advancement and increase objective career outcomes

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## ADVANTAGES

- ▶ A Well-structured sponsorship program increases team's chances of success
- ▶ Helps department improve performance
- ▶ Strong teaching environments builds on the inclusive culture
- ▶ Contributes to overall productivity and happiness in the department
- ▶ Better business outcomes:
  - ▶ Fortune 500 companies with the highest representation of women on their boards financially outperform those with the fewest.
  - ▶ According to HBR, "Gender balance in companies and on teams improves a host of outcomes including financial results, innovation, decision making, organizational commitment, retention and job satisfaction."
- ▶ Addresses Implicit and Affinity Biases

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## CRITICAL COMPONENTS

- ▶ Build a Formal Structure and Framework for Sponsorship Program
- ▶ Buy-in and support from Organization's Senior Leadership

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## IMPLEMENTATION

- ▶ Start Small: Pilot Program
  - ▶ Groundwork for Formal Sponsorship Program
- ▶ Potential Pool of Candidates
  - ▶ Leadership Academy
  - ▶ Innovation Academy

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## Matching-Making Program/Process

- ▶ Create Selection Criteria for diverse candidates
- ▶ Prioritize sponsors - for underrepresented groups
- ▶ Create an opt-in sponsorship program
- ▶ Create goals
  - ▶ Actionable Goals: to improve leadership potential and increase promotions
  - ▶ Setting a schedule for expectations, have regular meetings, and create actionable goals
- ▶ Train Sponsors and Sponsees on a Code of Conduct

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## METRICS

- ▶ One-year program - quarterly check-ins or meetings
- ▶ Measure Progress
  - ▶ New roles or assignments created
  - ▶ Results in promotions,
  - ▶ More weight in company discussions and influence in the field

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## Companies Adopting a Formal Sponsorship Program

- ▶ [American Express](#)
- ▶ [AT&T](#)
- ▶ [Citi](#)
- ▶ [Credit Suisse](#)
- ▶ [Crowell & Moring](#)
- ▶ [Deloitte](#)
- ▶ [Deutsche Bank](#)
- ▶ [EY](#)
- ▶ [Genentech](#)
- ▶ [Intel](#)
- ▶ [Morgan Stanley](#)