

Diversity Workforce Development Initiative

ANNOUNCEMENT

MAY 1, 2007

Thank you for participating in this Diversity Summit.

This is an important program, and holds special meaning for me.

I attended the first Diversity Summit, in 2000. It was during that event that many of us talked about what we could do to improve diversity within the association management profession. It was Tom Dolan's vision to hold the original Diversity Summit and it is very fitting that he is with us today. Thank you, Tom.

Today I stand before you as Board Chair – the first person of color to hold this position in the Forum's 91 year history.

It was a long time in coming. And while I have the privilege of being the first, I am determined that I won't be the last. It is my hope that many of you will want to serve the Forum and will find yourself standing here some day – or you will help others have that opportunity.

But as we aspire to our personal dreams, we must also work toward a larger goal: to make the profession of association management truly representative of society.

To that end, the Forum Board of Directors has an important announcement to make:

Today, the Association Forum is committing a minimum of \$1 million over the next 5 years to increase the employment of diverse management personnel employed by Chicagoland associations.

This Diversity Workforce Initiative has four elements:

- **To Increase opportunities** for diverse populations to learn about, apply for and succeed in association careers;
- **To Involve associations** in the recruitment effort;
- **To Sustain the effort** – with a high degree of visibility - over a period of time.
- **And to Measure and report on our progress.**

The heart of the effort is awareness and access. We know that there are qualified, talented and willing potential employees among diverse populations. There are also association job opportunities. The challenge is to bring these groups together. And so we will undertake a range of efforts, including:

- Exhibiting at career fairs such as those offered every year by the NAACP.
- Outreach to graduating seniors, grad students and alumni of area colleges and universities.
- Placing articles, ads and other information in publications and web sites aimed at diverse populations.
- Offering mentorships to association employees from diverse populations
- Working with other organizations to reach diverse audiences.

But that alone won't get many people hired. To do that, we need associations to step up and become actively engaged in outreach. And so we are asking for at least 50 associations to make an annual commitment of at least 10 hours of staff time to assist with the Forum booth at job fairs and to speak at events.

These associations have already signed on to this effort:

Institute of Food Technologists
National Association of Social Workers IL Chapter
Human Resources Management Association of
Chicago
American Dietetic Association
American College of Health Care Executives
National Marine Manufacturers Association
Home Builders Association of Greater Chicago
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority
AMC
St. Jude League/Claretian Publications
Society of Tribologists and Lubrication Engineers
Million Dollar Round Table
American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons
National Roofing Contractors Association
American College of Osteopathic Family
Physicians

We'll do other things as well, including holding this Diversity Summit every other year to educate associations about how to best recruit and retain diverse management personnel.

And, we will tell our stories of how employee diversity benefits associations.

Finally, transparency and accountability is essential for this initiative. To achieve this, we will conduct research, gather data and provide frequent reports to our membership. We want you and others to know and understand what is happening and what achievements have been made.

Of course, there are more details. Please look for more information in the June issue of FORUM.

As association professionals we all know that an initiative like this will only succeed with dedicated staff support. We certainly have that in our President and CEO, Gary LaBranche. Gary has asked Jetaun Mallett, Director of Membership and Marketing to provide operational leadership for the Diversity Workforce Initiative. Prior to joining the Forum staff in November 2006, Jetaun served for 15 years on the staff of the National Black MBA Association. To assist Jetaun the Forum will hire a new staff person entirely focused on the diversity initiative.

They will be assisted by our talented Diversity Workforce Committee, which provided valuable input in the development of this program. Lori Porter, whom you have met, chaired the Diversity Committee through the end of March. Our new chair is Carla DeFlorio. Please join me in thanking both of them, and all the committee members, for their leadership.

To succeed, the Diversity Workforce Initiative must remain front and center, a constant, high-profile reminder of our commitment.

This is an ambitious and historic effort. We are very focused: our goal is to increase the number of diverse management personnel employed by associations – now.

I hope you will join us in making our profession the best it can be and, all that it should be.