

**2021 NASPE Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Advancing the HR Profession Award  
Program Nomination**

**Program Title:** New Jersey Civil Service Commission Annual Diversity Summit  
**State:** New Jersey  
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## **New Jersey Civil Service Commission (CSC) Diversity and Inclusion Summit**

### **Program Summary**

In the Spring, 2019 the New Jersey Civil Service Commission (CSC) began planning for its inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Summit that was held on June 21, 2019. The Summit was a new initiative that was developed by the CSC's newly created Office of Statewide Workforce Diversity and Inclusion and has become an annual event.

This event provides a valuable opportunity for State governments equal employment, diversity, human resources, and statewide professionals to learn best practices for attracting, hiring, and retaining a diverse talented workforce.

The Summit's content includes a keynote speaker, presentations, and a variety of topics discussed in small group settings. The Summit includes information for participants to better understand diversity, learn some diversity strategies, and know how to create institutional change when they return to their offices. State employees who attend are given opportunities to interact, network, and ask questions.

The Summit encourages appointing authorities and respective leadership to take deliberate and measurable steps to promote equal employment opportunity, diversity and inclusion within New Jersey's civil service workforce.

**1. Please provide a brief description of this program.**

The Diversity and Inclusion Summit is a full day of learning and exchanging ideas and strategies to move diversity forward within the state government civil service workforce and to create an inclusive and more welcoming environment for all state employees.

New Jersey's Civil Service Commission believes that businesses benefit from having a diverse workforce and the Diversity Summit supports everyone who attends to create inclusive workplaces that embrace differences in race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background, religion, disability and veteran status.

The goal of the summit is to have a meaningful discussion about the current state of diversity and inclusion in our departments and agencies; to understanding the importance and value of diversity and inclusion at work; and learn best practices and strategies to improve diversity and inclusion in New Jersey's state government.

**2. How long has this program or effort been operational?**

The CSC Diversity Summit has been operational for two years. In the Fall of 2020, the Diversity Summit was redesigned to accommodate a virtual format due to in-person restrictions associated with the COVID pandemic. On December 3, 2020, the second Summit was held and was attended by 159 public employees.<sup>1</sup>

**3. Why was this program/effort created?**

The Chair/Chief Executive Officer Deirdre Webster Cobb, Esq. of the CSC directed the Office of Statewide Workforce Diversity and Inclusion to develop a professional development

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<sup>1</sup> The attendance in the virtual Summit was higher than the first in-person Summit by approximately 50 attendees.

program to engage Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officers, Diversity Officers, Human Resources Officers, Employee Relations Personnel, other professionals and stakeholders on matters of diversity and inclusion. The purpose of the Summit is to provide state government employees with the opportunity to learn, share, and gain practical knowledge on best practices for attracting, hiring, and retaining diverse talent in New Jersey's workforce.

This effort led to an important opportunity for New Jersey's government employees to supplement CSC's efforts in advancing Governor Philip D. Murphy's agenda of creating a fairer and stronger New Jersey.

#### **4. What are the costs of this program/effort?**

The cost of this program was defrayed due to collaborative planning with institutional diversity and inclusion partners. Some of the expenditures usually associated with this type of program like speakers, facilitators, instructors, venue space, etc. were minimized due to in-kind contributions. The presenters provided curricula and speaking services at no or very low cost, i.e., travel reimbursement.

In 2019, there was a budget of \$5,000. To cover the costs with approximately 100 participants in attendance. For the 2020 program, the budget has been increased to \$7,000 to accommodate approximately 150 enrolled participants.

There were no 'new' costs for the Fall, 2020 program since the event was held on a virtual platform already secured by our agency. The presenters provided their time free of charge.

#### **4. How is the program/effort funded?<sup>2</sup>**

The program is funded by the Office of the Chair/Chief Executive Officer of the Civil Service Commission.

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<sup>2</sup> The costs are associated with an in-person program only.

**5. How do you measure the success of this program/effort?**

To measure the program's success surveys were administered to the Diversity Summit participants. The feedback from respondents was overwhelmingly positive. Respondents indicated a 90% satisfaction level when asked about the program's keynote speaker and workshops offered during the day. When respondents were asked if they felt the "knowledge gained during the Summit" could be applied to their jobs/work settings, 95% had an affirmative response.

**6. How has the program/effort changed since its inception?**

The program has changed in size since its inception. An increase in the number of registrants for the Summit, the content has been developed to include more cutting-edge information to be delivered by executive level experts. For example, this year's program content will include a presentation on diversity in the STEM/Cyber areas facilitated by a Cabinet level Official and with a presentation by a departmental Executive directing a transition to government employment via an internship program for candidates throughout the State and candidates from other areas of the country.

The Diversity Summit this year, will hear from many who are reporting that they did something substantial to show that diversity and inclusion matter at their department/agency.

To continue in this positive momentum on a statewide basis, we are pleased to announce as a result of the Diversity Summit the creation of a Diversity Council chaired by Dr. Charlie Williams, CSC's Executive Director of the Office of Diversity Programs.

The primary purpose of the Council is to serve as a statewide forum to provide diversity training, develop programs, provide resource information, as well as make recommendations on issues related to diversity and inclusion, as it pertains to the State of New Jersey civil service workforce.

It is the vision that each state agency and department will eventually have a representative on the council to serve as the diversity liaison and who will communicate information between the agency/department and the Council. Lastly, these liaisons have now become a part of facilitating the Annual Diversity Summit.

As an extension of the Diversity Summit, the CSC Diversity Council has developed an accompanying professional development program in the form of Roundtable Discussions. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the first Virtual CSC Diversity Council Roundtable program was held on April 15, 2021. The topics presented at this roundtable included: 1) Gender Identity and Inclusion in the Workplace, 2) The Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace, and 3) Diversity Recruitment and Outreach. The program was attended by 161 participants. A fall Roundtable has been scheduled for October 2021.