Thursday, October 7 • 4:00 pm

Panel discussions with West Virginia leaders on actions taken to address diversity, equity, and inclusion in their organizations

Register at www.racematterswv.tv

zoom

Host

Michelle Foster
President and CEO
Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation

Reflections

Rev. Ronald English
President , NAACP

Facilitators

Kitty Dooley
Principal
The Dooley
Law Firm, PLLC

Tom Heywood
Managing Partner
Bowles Rice LLP

Panelists

Chris Beam
President and COO
Appalachian Power

Felicia Bush
Founder and CEO
Harmony Mental
Health, Inc.

Ellen Cappellanti
Managing Member
Jackson Kelly PLLC

Kristi Dumas
Owner
Dumas Psychology Collective
The Brain Training Center

Christy Bly
Senior Vice President
Market President
Truist Bank

Craig Glover
CEO
FamilyCare Health Center

Mayor Amy Goodwin
City of Charleston

Chief Tyke Hunt
Charleston
Police Department

Shayla Leftridge
Director of Community
Outreach, Diversity
Equity, and Inclusion
West Virginia Health Right

Drew McClanahan
Director Office of
Leadership Support
West Virginia
Department of Education

Srini Matan
President
Toyota Motor
Manufacturing
West Virginia, Inc.

Angie Settle
CEO
West Virginia
Health Right

Joe Tackett
President
West Virginia
Symphony Orchestra

Dedriell Taylor
Chief Diversity, Equity
and Inclusion Officer
West Virginia
Wesleyan College

INTRODUCTION

> Do the best you can until you know better.
> Then when you know better, do better.
>
> — *Maya Angelou*

In 2020, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation hosted the 2020 Summit on Race Matters in West Virginia, a six-session series featuring 28 speakers with expertise in the field of social justice. The 2020 Summit was designed to raise awareness about systemic racism and racial disparities in criminal justice, education and employment, housing and wealth, and health, as well as increase understanding of the importance of civic engagement and the roots of racism.

Having worked to raise awareness, the next step was to move from awareness into action. Thus, the 2021 Summit on Race Matters in West Virginia was convened to focus on actions taken by community leaders within their companies and organizations to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). These leaders were invited to the conversation not because they are experts on race issues but because their organizations are taking action on matters of race.

Two back-to-back panels, with seven speakers on each panel, gathered to discuss the ways in which their companies and organizations are addressing DEI—first by short presentations within their respective organizations, followed by a Q&A session. Questions were submitted by community members prior to the event and facilitated by attorneys Kitty Dooley and Tom Heywood.

"We are not here to pat ourselves on the back in any way. We are here to share what steps we've taken to become more diverse and inclusive, and equitable in our organization," explains panelist Shayla Leftridge, Director of Community Outreach for DEI at WV Health Right. "And we're very much here to hold ourselves accountable, to encourage other organizations to hold themselves accountable, and for leaders to hold other leaders accountable."

Depending on the nature of each panelist's business, actions to address DEI differed. Many lessons learned thus far, however, were similar, and all panelists voiced an eagerness to listen and learn from each other. In fact, listening and learning, then incorporating what has been heard and learned into a strategy, was fundamental to a successful approach.

Panelists unanimously agreed that DEI must become embedded into the fabric of companies and organizations by deliberate and intentional actions. Discomfort will exist, and conversations will be had, but do not let it be a roadblock. Continue on the journey for equality, and understand that it's a marathon, not a sprint.

We hope the actions and recommendations of these organizations and their leaders will help promote ideas and inspiration, especially in other business leaders and interested parties looking to advance DEI in their workplaces and communities.

The 2021 Summit was recorded and transcribed, and a synthesis of those transcripts form the bulk of this report, which follows the format in which it was presented. Supporting documentation came from cited research, as indicated.

PANEL ONE / Presentations

Chris Beam

President and Chief Operating Officer, Appalachian Power

Sixty years after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* speech, equality for all has still not been achieved. "Despite the accomplishments of the Civil Rights Movement, this past year has proved that the dream has not been fully realized," says Chris Beam, President and COO of Appalachian Power.

"Prejudice and inequality persist in the United States. Appalachian Power and its parent company, American Electric Power, believe that diversity, equality, and inclusion are critical pieces of our company culture. We're committed to building a work environment where our team members feel valued and supported."

Appalachian Power has accelerated its diversity and inclusion strategies with employee activities that include town hall meetings, safe-space conversations, and video conferencing with African American leaders. Over the past year it has funded a new philanthropic initiative, *Delivering on a Dream,* a social and racial grant program designed to address systematic racial injustices in communities. "This five-year, $5-million effort puts words into action by funding organizations with programs dedicated to empowering equality for our customers and neighbors of color," says Beam. Grants totaling $1 million have already been awarded to four historically Black colleges and universities, including a $250,000 grant to Bluefield State College to support its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs for minority, underserved, and underrepresented students. "As an energy company, Appalachian Power knows STEM fields not only offer rewarding career opportunities, but that these jobs are essential to delivering the clean, reliable, and affordable energy our customers rely on every day," Beam continues. "Now more than ever, we're committed to working together with the communities we serve to help make Martin Luther King's dream a reality."

Felicia Bush

Chief Executive Officer, Harmony Mental Health

Harmony Mental Health, a private nonprofit incorporated in 2014, works to address mental health and social service needs for children and families in marginalized communities in five West Virginia counties. Co-founder and CEO, Felicia Bush, says

Harmony was created out of a need to provide a safe space for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, among others, while simultaneously providing trauma-informed mental health services. Within this safe space, Harmony attempts to pursue and implement its own vision of social justice that is free from ingrained systemic barriers that inhibit individual growth and success.

"As a Black woman raising Black children, diversity, equity, and inclusion have been critically important to me personally," says Bush. "It is important to Harmony as a corporation. It is simply part of our corporate DNA."

Yet even at Harmony, with its diverse staff and board of directors, Bush says that events of the past few years revealed a lack of understanding about racism's deep roots. "We discovered that it was among us, alive and well, in our self-created safe space. That understanding required us to stop talking about racism and begin rooting it out."

Specific actions to root out racism include addressing incidents of racism in the workplace immediately; providing trainings on topics such as gender issues, trauma and its impacts, and diversity and leadership; honoring all religious holidays and expressions; and practicing and incorporating diversity into daily work life.

"We have new initiatives in the works, and we still have more work to do," says Bush, "but all of these actions that we're taking increase our level of diversity, equity, and inclusion and give me hope, but none so much as watching our efforts play out. This is celebrating the rich cultural heritage that is Harmony. This is the world I want to live in and the company I want to lead."

Ellen Cappellanti

Managing Member, Jackson Kelly Law Firm PLLC

Ellen Cappellanti is a managing member of Jackson Kelly PLLC, one of West Virginia's largest law firms with offices in six states and the District of Columbia. "At our firm, we drive diversity inclusion through a very robust committee," she says. "What do we say when people ask why diversity inclusion is important? Besides the fact that it's just morally the right thing to do,

the science and research is pretty clear that it leads to better organizations."

Cappellanti explains that, for example, diversity increases innovation, creativity, and strategic thinking, and results in better decisions. You attract a better workforce. "The stars look for more inclusive companies. There's enhanced employee retention at diverse companies, and being rather self-serving, it's just good for your brand."

She cautions that as a leader it's not just enough to recruit; you also have to work harder to retain that diverse workforce. "That means creating an environment where opinions are valued. As a leader, it requires continual training and messaging to your workforce about the importance of diversity, and it requires senior management to own it and continually reinforce it."

Jackson Kelly has embarked on many diversity initiatives, including a speakers' series; implicit bias trainings; supporting programs that provide opportunities for diverse law students, such as paid summer clerkships and mentoring programs; pro bono services to Black businesses impacted by COVID-19; and pursing a Mansfield Diversity Certification, which requires a proven increase of diversity in leadership.

"We're trying, but we have a long way to go," says Cappellanti. "It is very, very difficult to recruit lawyers of color in many of the places where we have offices. The population is low and it's just very difficult to encourage people to move into a community where there's not a connection."

Still, she says Jackson Kelly will continue to support organizations in the legal profession that promote and encourage diversity and inclusion, and its will assist diverse populations with accessing financial assistance, legal assistance, heath care, education, and employment.

Christy Bly

Senior Vice President and Market President, Truist Bank

Christy Bly, Senior VP and Market President of Truist Bank (formerly BB&T and SunTrust) in Charleston, West Virginia, acknowledges that she is a White woman working in a Caucasian-dominated field. While she has experienced gender bias in her male-dominated field, she does not have the lived experiences of Black people. What she does have, however, is compassion, empathy and the power to impact meaningful change regarding new hires and promotions, among other things.

"Truist is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion, and not just the words," says Bly, who concedes that unwinding the damage created by centuries of racial disparities and inequities will take time, intention, and commitment. "We boldly believe we have the power to achieve these things together. It's a journey, and one that most of us are still on."

In the past three years, Bly says DEI at Truist has gone from pre-awareness to awareness. It has now reached the action stage of the journey, which includes a racially, ethnically, gender-

diverse board of directors and executive leadership team as well as ongoing pay-equity reviews. Other initiatives include the development of eight business-resource groups to increase cultural awareness and foster inclusivity; hosting "understanding sessions" with conversations on race and social justice; training leaders to recognize and change unconscious biases and to provide inclusion and diverse learning opportunities; providing an initial $40 million to help establish the national nonprofit Corner Square Community Capitol to support community development financial institutions (CDFIs) that allocate 100% of the funding to racially and ethnically diverse small business owners; and selecting and purchasing from diverse suppliers who reflect Truist's company values. Among other ongoing initiatives, Truist signed the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion pledge in 2020 to support a more inclusive workplace.

"Progress has been made and progress will continue as long as we hold one another accountable for our actions or our inactions," says Bly. "The work is not complete, but I have a lot of hope for the future, for Charleston, for West Virginia, and for the country."

PANEL ONE / Presentations

Craig Glover

President and Chief Executive Officer, FamilyCare Health Centers

FamilyCare Health Centers provide full-service medical, behavioral, and dental health services in 15 locations and three mobile units in West Virginia. The nonprofit, community-based health provider serves a diverse population of 32,000 people annually, including women, minorities, LGBTQ, and others. "I would say we have been in the business of diversity and inclusion our entire 32-year history," says Craig Glover, President and CEO of FamilyCare. "It's not enough just to say that this is what you're doing, though. You really have to be purposeful about it, and that comes through developing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy."

DEI strategy development means something different to each organization; it is not a cookie-cutter approach according to Glover, an African American who understands firsthand the distinct challenges minorities face. "Our partners and patients have unique characteristics that they bring to us, and we're taking that into account as we develop our strategy," which first includes educating the board of directors, followed by the associates at FamilyCare. "We still have a long way to go. DEI development is a marathon, not a sprint, and we are just getting started on our way out of the blocks. At the end of the day, we want to be an organization that embraces everybody's individualism and makes sure everybody feels comfortable with our services."

Joe Tackett

President, West Virginia Symphony Orchestra

The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra is the largest performing-arts organization in West Virginia, as well as the state's largest employer of artists. Its president, Joe Tackett, says, "We have recognized that we need to build bridges to

increase diversity across every aspect of the organization, from the musicians on the stage to the people who attend our concerts, and even the decisionmakers in the boardroom."

A DEI committee was established at the organization in July 2020. "We began asking some really uncomfortable questions," says Tackett. "To be frank, our orchestra doesn't have any Black or Latino musicians. Our board had one Black member at the time. Our audience is predominantly White. We had to face the reality that, largely, classical music has strategically positioned itself for the enjoyment of one group of people while purposely shutting out or ignoring others."

When the committee looked at the music the orchestra had performed over its first 80 seasons, it found that only three works by Black composers had been performed. "There was a lot of work to be done, but we are already seeing the fruits of our labors," says Tackett.

The board purposely became more diverse by appointing members from marginalized communities. Their voices now help with programming, public interaction, and the makeup of musicians on the stage. In addition, the organization has committed to ongoing DEI training with its board and has made deliberate commitments to amplify underrepresented and often unheard voices.

For instance, at the annual Young People's Concert, all pieces performed were by Black composers. "The concert was broadcast and streamed through classrooms across the state. Over 16,000 children heard the music by composers who deserve a voice," says Tackett. "Of everything the orchestra has done, it's perhaps my proudest achievement."

In the upcoming season, every concert will contain a piece composed or performed by an artist of color. But despite this kind of progress, many challenges remain for the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra—like changing the audition process for musicians so that it is more inclusive, encourages people of color to audition, and finds ways to build audiences of color.

"We need to remain vigilant and not allow these voices to fall into the background again," says Tackett. "Our goal is to make them so omnipresent that we think of them only by their last names, like Mozart, Beethoven, and Bach."

Bob Welch

General Manager, Toyota Manufacturing

Bob Welch, General Manager of Toyota Manufacturing in West Virginia, says diversity and inclusion is important to Toyota, globally, nationally, and in West Virginia—first and foremost because it's the right thing to do, which is not always the easiest thing to do. "But it's a necessary journey for any company that wants to be relevant in today's economy and going forward," he says. Secondly, research has shown time and again that inclusive teams produce the most innovative, creative, and robust solutions, which results in a competitive edge. "And if you're in manufacturing, by default you are for competitiveness, and the constant pursuit of competitiveness is a never-ending journey," Welch continues.

With 80,000 employees in North America, Toyota works hard to create a welcoming environment in every site, says Welch. That includes continuous improvements on the processes the employees work on, the products they provide to customers, and their own self-development.

All sites include business partner groups of underrepresented people. "We have three groups at the West Virginia plant: the African American Collaborative, our Women's Initiative, and Spectrum, which represents the LGBTQ community," says Welch, adding that in the last year, business partner groups nationally contributed $475,000 to 48 nonprofits. As a corporation in North America, Toyota has partnered with 11 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and given over $110,000 to the United Negro College Fund.

Locally, at the West Virginia plant, town hall meetings are held with diverse members. "We meet face-to-face and allow for shared experiences and to learn about our own biases," says Welch. "We recently crafted a three-year DEI plan at the West Virginia plant to help us move from awareness to advocacy."

PANEL ONE / Q & A

Depending on the topic, questions posed to the panel were answered by some or most panelists. Robust and frank discussions led to an amalgamation of recommendations.

What are you doing to ensure that the changes in your organization are systemic and lasting?

Recommendations

Embed DEI into your organization's strategic plan.

- "You have to have a dedicated plan upfront to make sure your organization gets on the right path."
  — *Chris Beam, Appalachian Electric*
- Present a report on the strategic plan to your board of directors regularly. As plans develop, add new practices. Stay current. Ultimately, DEI will become part of the fabric of your organization.
- Instill DEI in your business so that when employees are hired or promoted, or when there's a change in leadership, DEI is not a new plan; it is the plan.

Make deliberate efforts and decisions to enhance DEI.

- In finance:
  - Invest in minority-owned and small businesses.
  - Make funding available, whether grant funding or access to capital.
  - Don't expect clients to come and find you; go to them. Make them aware of opportunities they have with financial institutions.
- In the arts:
  - Add diverse artists to your galleries and museums.
  - Commission and perform works by Black and minority composers, actors, and others. Make their voices and stories heard.

Ensure that DEI initiatives trickle down from the highest levels of leadership, through management, to line employees.

- Make DEI relevant to each person. "It's about showing value to the individual. DEI can start at the top—we're going to do this because it's the right thing to do—but you have to be able to take that strategy, break it down into smaller pieces, and then show that individual that there's value to him or her in doing this work. I think that's really how you get the buy-in, and you can start to wade through some of the pushback you may get."
  — *Craig Glover, FamilyCare Health Centers*
- Employ DEI liaisons. "American Electric Power is a very large organization, and it's spread out all over. Diversity and Inclusion liaisons are frontline folks who help lead our effort. We've found success in using them. There's trust built with these folks locally. They know the work environment and the people that are trying to get the work done."
  — *Chris Beam, Appalachian Power*
- Bring in national speakers from across the country so your staff and employees can hear from someone outside yourself or your organization. "With lawyers, that's what's really been effective. It's all about telling interesting stories."
  — *Ellen Cappellanti, Jackson Kelly Law Firm PLLC*
- Conduct a "Privilege Walk" (*https://www.eiu.edu/eiu1111/Privilege Walk Exercise- Transfer Leadership Institute- Week 4.pdf*) to create a visual representation of social advantages, both earned and unearned.
- When staff or employees encounter situations they can't resolve, or feel uncomfortable discussing with management, link them directly to your board members for discussion. This demonstrates that DEI is important to the culture of your organization from the top down.

What DEI strategies have you seen in your businesses and organizations that have worked well, or not worked so well?

Recommendations

Create critical mass.

- Flying solo, or being the only person in the office who's a woman or person of color, is not likely to engender success. "One person alone, hiring one person of color, it's very difficult for that person to be successful. It's a great start, but you have to be more intentional and create more critical mass."
  — Ellen Cappellanti, Jackson Kelly Law Firm PLLC

Meet one-on-one.

- Members of management, from first-level supervision to senior leadership, should meet one-on-one with diverse members of their organizations.
  - Don't assume or be presumptuous. "Hear what their experiences are, and you'll be amazed, shocked, horrified at the experiences going on in your own blind spots if you're part of the dominant culture. When you have that experience, it strengthens your team overall. It makes the space more comfortable."
    — Bob Welch, Toyota Manufacturing
  - Once management understands DEI principles and practices, it should continue on to the next part of the journey by creating and implementing plans to reach, educate, and enlighten every single team member.

Listen to feedback and then do something about it.

- "We've learned the hard way, unfortunately, that if you go and ask questions and then you do nothing about the feedback you get, you won't get any more feedback."
  — Chris Beam, Appalachian Power
- "Create an environment where people feel safe enough to come forward. It's certainly not going to happen if you ask the questions and then do nothing. You've got to create that safe space for people and let them know that this is a priority for your organization."
  — Felicia Bush, Harmony Mental Health

PANEL ONE / Q & A

In West Virginia, only 3% of the population is African American, with a total minority population of 6%. What efforts are you undertaking that have allowed you to recruit and retain this population, and what ideas do you have that might assist others?

Recommendations

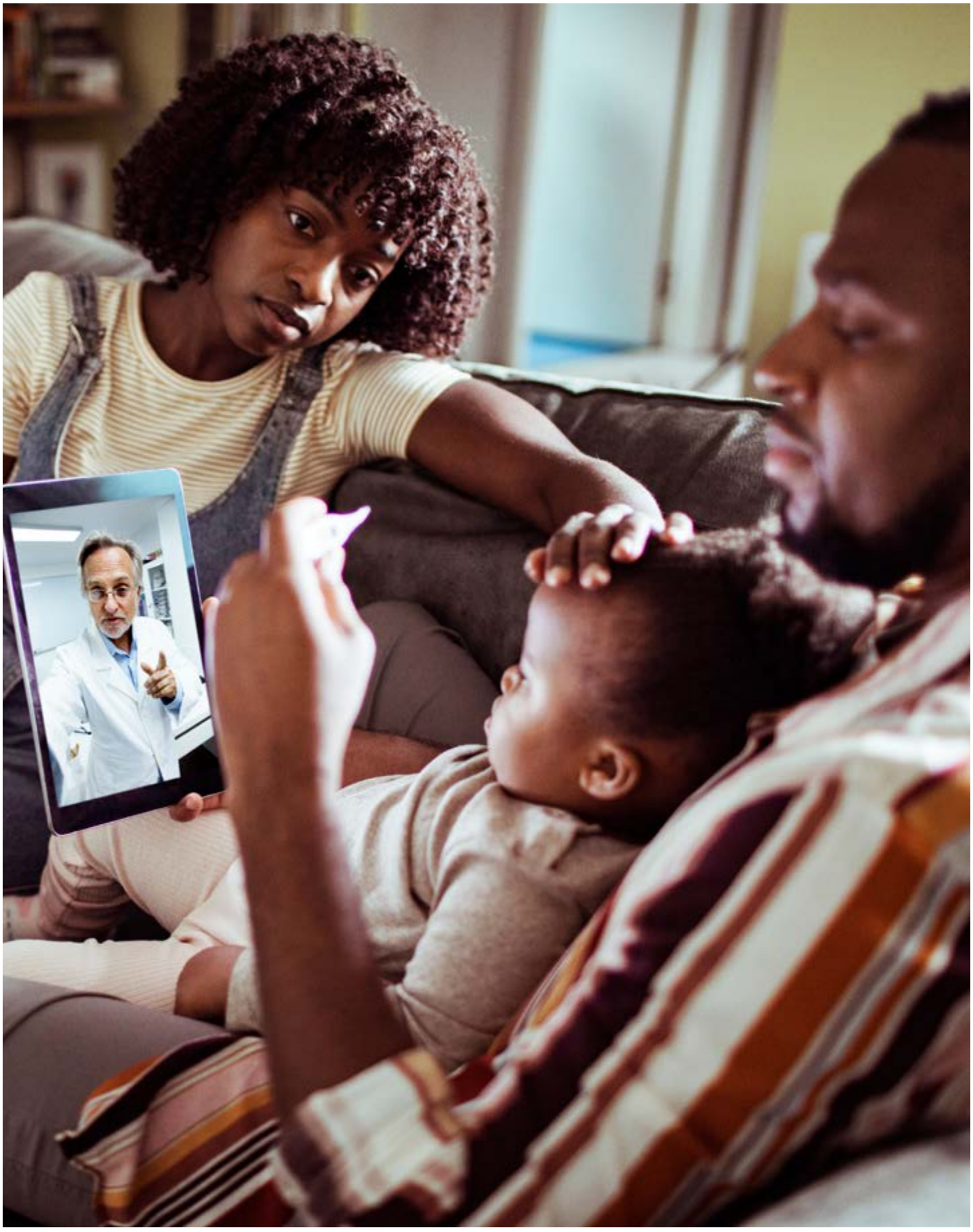
Recruitment
(see Panel 2 Q&A in the next session for further discussion)

Connect potential recruits from outside the area to the community.

- Find out what's important to them. Is it schools? Recreation? Other groups or places where they can fit into the community? Craig Glover of FamilyCare Health Centers is an African American doctor who was recruited to West Virginia over two years ago. "Prior to the move, I found that some folks I was already connected to were living here. I think that's important."
- Find out what they like. "Are they interested in dancing?" says Christy Bly of Truist Bank, who is part of a recruiting effort to attract individuals to live within the city limits of Charleston. "Can we introduce them, get them connected? Give them a sense of feeling to the community."
- Let potential recruits know your organization has focused efforts on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Even if you're not yet where you want to be, it shows that you're working on it, and it can help to attract candidates.
- Employ an active recruiter for your company and proactively seek applicants. "Candidates will not come to you. You have to show them what you offer, why it's a good place to work, why it's the right culture to work in. When you do that, you'll get the folks you want."
  — Chris Beam, Appalachian Power
- Within West Virginia, determine the obstacles to attracting a diverse workforce and then work to craft plans to overcome them.
  - Poll diverse team members in your organization and ask, what are the obstacles? Is it childcare, for instance? Is it travel to and from work? "Ask the people that you bring in, *what is it going to take to attract more people like you into our field?*"
    — Felicia Bush, Harmony Mental Health
  - Meet with people in diverse communities and ask them about obstacles.

Get involved in the schools

- Craft plans to create programs for elementary and middle schools.
- Arrange for middle school kids to come and see what it is that you do so they can choose a career path.
- Start recruitment efforts in middle school. "At American Electric Power, we offer careers, not jobs, yet folks still don't attract to you. They either don't know who you are or where you are, and so we've found you have to start recruiting in middle schools."
  — Chris Beam, Appalachian Power
- Offer paid internships to high school and college students.
- Market your product or company to predominantly Black colleges, or reach out to educational facilities with a large minority population. "Make sure they understand that there's a place for them, and make sure they see themselves reflected in your population as much as possible."
  — Felicia Bush, Harmony Mental Health



PANEL ONE / Q & A

Did you meet with resistance in your organizations when rolling out DEI initiatives, and if so, how did you overcome or address it?

Within various organizations, panelists reported that a level of discomfort was often felt among employees and management alike when first rolling out DEI initiatives. As awareness grew, particularly through the telling of stories, uncomfortable feelings tended to diminish, making way for a DEI culture to take root. But experiences varied, and all panelists agreed that the journey to create and maintain a healthy and diverse culture remains ongoing.

When Truist Bank implemented a Day of Understanding, Christy Bly of Truist Bank discovered there was hesitancy from team members who see each other daily to take advantage of the opportunity for discussion. "What I found was once they got to hear stories throughout the company from people they didn't see regularly, they really had eye-opening experiences, and after that we all came together and had productive conversations. It was very touching."

After several DEI presentations, Ellen Cappellanti's law firm, Jackson Kelly Law Firm PLLC, conducted an anonymous survey, in her words, "because no one is going to often say what they think on the record." Only one negative comment about the DEI effort surfaced. "I thought it was just a poor comment, but it was very devastating to a couple of our Black attorneys on the diversity committee." As a result, Cappellanti is now exploring ways to facilitate listening sessions where everyone feels comfortable. "I think that's something we really haven't done, and it would be a very worthy exercise in most organizations," she says.

Three panelists share their experiences, in their own words.

Bob Welch, *Toyota Manufacturing*

"For us at Toyota, the last year and a half, we really kind of hit a critical mass with George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor. The cadence of those atrocities happening in such a short period of time, it was a boiling-over point. Even though we don't have any heavy representation of African American team members in our plant, it was enough critical mass to cause us to come forward. A lot of us had blind spots and didn't really realize the pain that was going on, quite honestly.

"In that year and a half, what started as uncomfortable conversations really aren't that uncomfortable anymore. For maybe the past 20 years there was always a cloud, a burden on those folks' shoulders that some of us weren't aware of. But now our awareness is increased and we're on the road to advocacy and moving from bystanding to upstanding. It's a long journey, but we feel like we're moving forward on it."

DEI strategies that Welch uses to keep moving forward include:

- Holding town hall meetings at the Toyota plant with both leaders and diverse employees. "First, you've got to set the ground rules: This is a comfortable place, respectful both ways, a share. Once we held these meetings at the senior level, we saw how powerful they were. And luckily, our team members were willing to go through that pain, time and time again, and share it in person as we moved down to the first level of supervisors. It's really moving."
    - Tip: Assign a book for everyone on a team to read. When meeting again, appoint someone to lead and facilitate a conversation about the book. (Suggestion: *What If* by Steve Robbins. *https://www.slrobbins.com/what-if*)
- Various "business partner" groups exist within Toyota — some that represent minorities like the African-American Collaborative, and others that do not, like the Young Professionals' group. These groups work together collaboratively on outside activities, including a group that engages in Latino and Hispanic areas of the community. "That's been a powerful tool," says Welch.
- "Individually, reverse mentoring is something I participate in, meeting with an African American employee on a weekly basis. It's really just sharing some work-related items, but more, it's a free space for bouncing things off each other and helping."

Felicia Bush, *Harmony Mental Health*

"We absolutely met resistance, which is interesting because we're an African American organization, but we have a base of Caucasian employees, and their discomfort in addressing any of these issues was palpable. So, there came a point where we did what we could do to raise awareness, to raise understanding, and raise the issue that this is core to who we

PANEL ONE / Q & A

are as a company. I have an opening speech for everybody I hire: *This is a black, female-owned, social-justice organization that serves people who are victims of crime, people who have experienced interpersonal violence, domestic violence, sexual assault. If you have a problem with any of that, this is not the place for you.*

"And they come on. And then they find out that they do have a problem with one or more of the things I've said. So, it's important that you decide to go forward anyway, even when it's uncomfortable. The people who can't adjust, can't feel comfortable, learn, experience other people and other cultures and understand what riches that adds to their lives—then they make the decision to move on, and that's okay. It feels like failure, but it really isn't. It's really creating the organization that you want to reflect and that you want your clients to see and be comfortable in."

Joe Tackett, *West Virginia Symphony Orchestra*
"I would say that at the symphony, I've been very happily surprised that we have a board of directors that has embraced the idea of diversity, equality, and inclusion, totally. We have audience members who have been very responsive to the new programming that we've done as well. Musicians individually also have expressed great interest in it. One of the roadblocks that we often get is we're a unionized organization—and while our individual musicians really embrace this idea of expanding our audiences and expanding our programming, the union and our collective-bargaining contract are a bit of a brick wall for us in trying to bring in new faces and voices.

"I certainly think that when we renegotiate our collective-bargaining agreement next year, the topic of DEI will be a major part of the conversation. I think the musicians will be expecting that as well, because we've got to find a way to change the culture. We'll have to tackle that as we go along. As for us as an organization, we have changed policies, we have changed strategic plans, we have changed the mission statement, and the next step of that is bringing the musicians and the unionized labor along with us."

Have you changed policies or processes in your organizations as you've attempted to move the needle on DEI issues? Were any particularly impactful?

As seen throughout discussions in this report, policy changes and processes have, indeed, occurred within organizations. Both American Electric Power and Harmony Mental Health have created a multiracial holiday, or a floating holiday, that allows employees to choose the time off that best serves their needs and faith. "If another holiday means more to you than Good Friday, you take that holiday off instead," says Chris Beam, who originally encountered pushback on the policy but maintains it's a step in the right direction for the organization.

The most impactful change within the West Virginia Symphony Orchestra has been the change in programming. "It has changed every facet of how we do things," says Joe Tackett. "We didn't have music by Black composers in our library, so for us to program music by Black composers, we had to purchase music by Black composers. Now we own those pieces and they're available to us to play in perpetuity."

- Post all positions and opportunities available to those who reasonably qualify, instead of picking an obvious or usual choice.
- Consider who your company sends to pitch clients. "Our clients have been the ones to move things by making lawyers and law firms accountable regarding how they stack cases. With change, you need an external change agent, and that's what our clients are doing to our profession, which is a wonderful step.
  — *Ellen Cappellanti, Jackson Kelly Law Firm PLLC*
- Be very conscious about promotions and how you consider which individuals will move up in your organization, knowing there is a need for more diverse senior leadership. "It doesn't mean that we can immediately flip the switch to do that. There are skills, but we've been intentional about elevating people of color into those positions."
  — *Christy Bly, Truist Bank*

PANEL ONE / Q & A

Studies show that implicit bias—unconscious attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding and actions—creates inequality in, for instance, housing opportunities or the level of health care we receive. How do you remedy implicit bias, which can lead to fewer opportunities for advancement and other discrepancies, when people are unaware or reluctant to believe they have biases?

While implicit bias training is usually incorporated as a first step toward awareness, a definitive answer remains unclear. "It's difficult to address, because sometimes people are not really aware of how they may be responding to someone," says Craig Glover of FamilyCare Health Centers. "We have offered implicit bias training in the past, but as we look at developing our strategy, we have to consider how to best address it—because there's definitely a dichotomy in health care based on race."

Like other panelists, Ellen Cappellanti, a White attorney with Jackson Kelly Law Firm PLLC, believes implicit bias training is essential. "Until you go through the training, you just have no idea what you've been missing," she says. "I think it's the most eye-opening thing I've done in recent years."

"All of the hiring managers at American Electric Power have been through implicit bias training," says Chris Beam. Additionally, a single individual can no longer determine a hire. "It's a diverse panel that you must go through to make a hire, and that's done on purpose. I think we're getting better results because of that, but it's still a little early yet."

As the leader of your organization, and personal to you, what have you done to educate yourself on racial and ethnic differences, and what's been the most significant?

As mentioned, most if not all panelists attended implicit bias trainings as a first step in orienting themselves to DEI. Christy Bly of Truist Bank says that through the training, and in talking with various individuals, she was able to recognize the privilege of being born in America with light skin. She hopes it makes her a better ally. It gave her the confidence to have hard but necessary conversations about race and DEI. "I lost a few friends, or so-called friends, through the process. Someone close to me said, *what you lose you will gain back twofold* and that's been true." Bly says she's had personal experiences, "understanding others at a much deeper level. It's important for us personally as leaders to go through these processes and to be open and vulnerable with others about personal things we may have done in the past that we're not proud of. Now that we know better, we have to do better."

Education must come from credible sources. Find experts in the field to learn from, read from, talk to. Be a lifelong student and learn from others. "Part of it is just being aware of what's occurring around you, and implementing what you're learning in a meaningful way," says Craig Glover of FamilyCare Health Centers.

All panelists agreed that understanding the complexities of race and DEI never ends, whether White or Black or any color in between. As your learning and understanding grow, a sense of empowerment and confidence build, too. So does a level of comfort in responding to inappropriate situations that present themselves, whether within your business or your family. "If you hear something and say nothing, you condone it, which means you support it," says Chris Beam of Appalachian Power.

Don't be complicit. Stand up. Speak out.

BLACK
OWNED
BUSINESS

PANEL TWO / Presentations

Dr. Kristi Dumas

Chief Executive Officer, Dumas Psychology Collective

Dr. Kristi Dumas, a psychologist and an African American, is the owner and CEO of Dumas Psychology Collective, a community mental health agency in Beckley, West Virginia. As a certified brain trainer, she also runs an affiliated wellness program, The Brain Training Center. Among other things, it offers neurofeedback for problems such as attention and focus to chronic pain and addiction. Her agency has been awarded New River Gorge Development Authority's Business of the Year recognition and earned the Beckley Pride LGBTQ's Business Award for its inclusive approach to mental health service delivery.

While 90% of Dumas's employees fit a minority category as established by the federal government, she cautions there is still much work to do. That includes, in her words, "early identification of mental health care professionals with whom we can train before clinician fatigue sets in." Dumas advises leaders in the mental health sector to be cognizant that traditional psychological series, testing, and interventions were not normed on diverse populations, particularly people of color. "We must be mindful of the tools we use and who we hire to facilitate them. Leaders are responsible for the person delivering service. You must make sure that they clinically and professionally align with your mission, and make DEI your mission."

Amy Schuler Goodwin

Mayor, City of Charleston, West Virginia

As the first female mayor in the City of Charleston, Amy Schuler Goodwin understands what it's like to be the only woman sitting at the table. "To say that diversity and inclusion was immediately part of our mission is an understatement," she says. Goodwin's team has hired the most diverse and the youngest administration in Charleston's history. She learned quickly that it was a good but very small step forward.

Since Goodwin assumed office in January 2019, a series of DEI actions and improvements have been implemented. They include the following:

- Established the first LGBTQ working group to help with the development of policies and practices in the City of Charleston, with representation from the Charleston Police Department, the City of Charleston, City Council, and the general public
- Established the first Youth Council, created in response to the tragic killing of Tre'Quan Gibson, 19, on Charleston's West Side on July 4, 2019
- Established the Charleston Council for Outreach and Empowerment (C-COrE), a small business program to help minorities and women start or maintain businesses. "The meetings that we've had, particularly in our communities of color, have been, quite frankly, really hard discussions to have," says Goodwin. "A lot focused on the relationship our community has with our police officers and our youth. The conversations were really important but super challenging."
- Raised Charleston's municipal equality index score from 62 to 92 in the administration's first 18 months—and in 2021, Charleston became one of three municipalities in West Virginia to receive an All-Star status (a score of 85 or more) along with Huntington and Morgantown.
- Implemented Ban the Box so that employers consider a candidate's qualifications first. By removing the arrest and conviction history check box from applications, background checks are delayed until later in the hiring process. "We did it with gusto," Goodwin says.
- Dismantled a Confederate monument on City of Charleston property.
- Improved the CROWN Act (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair), which prohibits anti-hair discrimination.

"We look forward to improving government in every single department," says Goodwin. "If you don't think the work of planning streets and traffic should be more diverse and inclusive, I'm telling you that it should. It matters a lot." She continued, "As well, future funding from the American Rescue Plan will have a monumental impact on making the City of Charleston and all of our communities across Appalachia more diverse and inclusive."

PANEL TWO / Presentations

James "Tyke" Hunt

Chief of Police, Charleston, West Virginia

"I am very invested in our communities here," says Police Chief James "Tyke" Hunt, a 16-year veteran of the Charleston police department who grew up on Charleston's West Side.

When Mayor Goodwin interviewed Tyke Hunt for the Chief of Police position, she learned he was a man of faith, a Christian.

On being appointed chief, Hunt says, "Right out of the gate, she set me up with a group of faith leaders from all over Charleston. There were difficult questions asked initially. But because we all have faith, we were able to openly discuss them and have some good, earnest conversations." As a result, Hunt says, "I have drawn upon our community leaders a lot throughout my term as chief, and I will continue to do so. It's going to take all of us. We are only as strong as the communities we serve."

Hunt says he is, "willing to take the bull by the horns and make the changes needed." Prior to the George Floyd murder, changes included implementation of Emotional Intelligence training and removal of choke holds and the Use of Force policy from policies and procedures. "We in no way want to bring harm to anyone out there if we do have to respond to resistance and aggression. I never want anyone we are serving to think we're looking for an excuse to use force. De-escalation is our mission and is referred to multiple times throughout our policy."

Hunt credits community leaders he's known, and continues to meet, with helping to shape the Charleston police force. "I didn't need another significant incident to happen to open our eyes to the changes that need to be made in the police department," he says.

DEI work and changes continue, including a different approach to discipline. If it can be substantiated that supervisors are allowing officers to behave inappropriately, the supervisor as well as the officer are held accountable for their actions. "By drafting and enhancing policies for holding those folks accountable, we can become better," says Hunt.

His advice to law enforcement leaders: "If we're not policing ourselves, I don't believe we're going to be fit to enforce the law. We need to be held to the highest standards. Take a good, hard look at your policies."

Shayla Leftridge

Director of Community Outreach, DEI at WV Health Right Inc.

Shayla Leftridge is Director of Community Outreach at WV Health Right. As an African American, she believes that Professional Learning Community (PLC) leadership—professionals with lived experience who collaborate and learn together—is required for workplace success. "You must have diversity leadership in your workplace if you want to be successful, equitable, and inclusive—whether that is women, people in the LGBTQ+ community, or people of color," she says. Statistics show that diverse teams are 70% more likely to capture new markets, and the goal at WV Health Right is to help as many people across diverse markets as possible.

"We were able to begin that process with opening a clinic on the West Side," says Leftridge. She credits CEO Angie Settle with the clinic's success, because she was not only willing to hire Black leadership specifically, but because, "She knew you can't just hire token people. You must make sure you're listening, giving them empowerment so they can help you, and trusting them to do what they're there to do. They bring a perspective that you will not know anything about unless you listen and hear them."

It's not uncommon for organizations to say they can't find qualified candidates. Leftridge says if you can't find them or recruit them, you need to make them, like they do at WV Health Right.

"You hire people of color," she says. "You mentor them. Mentorship is the best thing you can do to have qualified leadership. When we're talking about equity, you may not have a population of people who have had the opportunity to be educated properly or to even have these chances to show what they can do. You have to give it to them.

"By empowering them that way, whether they stay with your organization or not, you have now mentored them and groomed them and made them able to go to other organizations. Then visually, especially in health care, people who are not trusting of what's going on see people who look like them. So, when they walk in our clinic, they're going to see representations of themselves, whatever group that is."

Leftridge says her organization will continue to make strides, one step at a time, and she hopes the leadership in other organizations realize that the DEI process is ongoing. "I'm not going to pat you on the back for doing the bare minimum, for doing what you're supposed to do," she says. "I'm going to say you've made a great first step and let's continue that process."

Drew McClanahan

Director of the Office of Leadership
West Virginia Department of Education

The omnipresence of public education, which exists in every community, county, and district across the state, presents distinct challenges, responsibilities, and opportunities for the

West Virginia Department of Education (DOE). Director of the Office of Leadership, Drew McClanahan, says the DOE has a responsibility to put structures in place for all students, regardless of their cultural background, skin color, religion, or sexual orientation. "Any factor that you can possibly give or label a student, we have a duty to provide for those students. I think that's a really exciting opportunity for our schools," says McClanahan.

Since March 2020, COVID-19 has revealed major inequities for students, from internet access to access to food. "We know that we have students who come to us from gross inequities and drastic backgrounds, and that we have to try to close those gaps," says McClanahan, who acknowledges that gaps are greater for students of color in attendance, discipline, school suspensions, and achievement. "We understand that these gaps are at a disagreement with our belief and our knowledge that all students can and will achieve if they're given the appropriate set of structures and supports," he said. To this end, the DOE has entered into a statewide equity partnership with the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs to adopt a set of beliefs surrounding equity.

Other actions include expansion of the Communities in Schools office; Career and Technical Education expansion; presentations and trainings with districts; online conversations with community leaders around the state; and an equity talk series, in which educators and educational leaders are given opportunities to talk about what DEI looks like in their schools and communities. "We're doing our best to lead tough

conversations, which includes being willing to knock down some of our own ideas and thoughts, because we know that we can set policy, but implementation occurs at the local level," says McClanahan.

Angie Settle

Chief Executive Officer, WV Health Right Inc.

Angie Settle is CEO of WV Health Right, the state's oldest and largest free and charitable clinic founded in 1982. She says she had an awakening a few years ago. "I'm a White female

Appalachian, and a lot of times I don't understand the issues faced by African Americans," some of whom come to her clinic for health care. During the George Floyd event and the COVID-19 pandemic, her awareness of the impact of inequities became more acute. That's particularly true in health care where, for instance, Black infants born in West Virginia die at nearly twice the rate as White infants. "We needed to do better," she says. "I just didn't know how to do better."

Settle has a Black friend, Shayla Leftridge (a SORM co-presenter) to whom she's often gone with questions about the African American experience. A CareFirst grant, which provides funding to meet the health care needs of vulnerable populations, also opened Settle's eyes to opportunities to do better. Early on, she decided to bring Leftridge on board as

PANEL TWO / Presentations

WV Health Right's DEI point person. "Probably the best thing I've done is to hire her to help me through this whole process in terms of doing more outreach, and in terms of working on the West Side," says Settle. "We're making major strides. I'm not an expert in any way, but she's taught me a lot. I'm learning every day, and we're trying to do better every day."

Settle's advice for health care providers: "It's so important when you're looking at issues such as LGBTQ, for example, that you recognize where your inadequacies are and that you need somebody with that lived experience to help you."

Dr. Dedriell Taylor

Chief Officer of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
West Virginia Wesleyan College

Dedriell Taylor, an African American, is the first person to hold the position of Chief of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at West Virginia Wesleyan College. In February 2021, Taylor was Interviewed by a diverse panel of faculty and dedicated students, with students having the majority vote. She was selected to provide leadership, education, and accountability to what happens on campus as it relates to DEI issues.

Out of the gate, students came to Taylor and asked for conversations with faculty about issues they wanted to see addressed on campus. She orchestrated Conversations and Courage, a series of discussions with students of color, queer students, and AAPI students (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders).

Different initiatives were created for those conversations. They included a partnership with the school's Center for Restorative Justice and the Black student union, and implementation of residential housing that is gender inclusive. "Our queer students wanted a safe place on campus where they could be with people they identify with, who understood how they felt," says Taylor.

Activities on campus to promote cultural awareness are also in the works. They include another conversational series, Let's Talk, in partnership with Taylor's office, the Black student union, the international student organization, and PRISM, the gay-straight alliance. Different topics will continue to generate more discussion, from gender equity to food insecurity, says Taylor—"just whatever the students are passionate about."

What's especially important to Taylor? Being there for students. "I've been working to make myself more accessible to them, so they don't come to me only when they have a grievance," she says. "I want to be that safe place for them to come to when they just need to talk."

PANEL TWO / Q & A

What work is being done within the City of Charleston to address cultural differences and the needs of people we serve, whether it be housing or policing? What's the most effective?

Chief Hunt of the Charleston Police Department says the biggest step his police force has taken thus far is getting familiar with different communities and the people and issues within them.

> "When I first came into office, I did an all-call with our police officers. It was the first time in Charleston police history that every police officer was under the same roof, in the same room, at the same time, to hear the same message. That message was very simple: We are to treat everyone in this city fairly. We are going to hold ourselves to a much higher standard, and we're going to get out of the cars.
>
> "You can't engage with your community the way you should if you're just driving by and checking. I like our officers getting out of cars and getting to know people. I put it into our training program. Depending on call volume, every one of our new officers in the field-training program, on a daily basis, goes out on a non-dispatch call on their own, finds a person in the community that they have never met before, introduces themselves, and develops some type of rapport. Get to know the folks in your community, the folks you're providing a service to. It is through that trust and that mutual relationship that we're going to make a difference."

Recommendations by Chief Hunt

- Look to community leaders in specific neighborhoods—community watch leaders, faith leaders—listen to them directly, understand their needs.
- Attend neighborhood churches. "Because then I get to use the good Lord as our vessel to open our ears and eyes to hear and see each other more plainly," says Chief Hunt.
- Look at specific data for individual communities. From it, decipher patterns and deficiencies. Target those areas to work on and improve.

Mayor Goodwin agrees that there's nothing like personal interaction to help people better appreciate one another. She learned through her campaign that the most effective way to understand cultural differences and people's needs is by going door to door. "People are most honest with you when you're on their front porch, on their turf," she says. Once elected, she took what she learned in the campaign and moved it into the office, first by starting the Charleston's Walks program, going door to door to meet people and understand their concerns. When the COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to home visits, the program was reimagined and relaunched as Connect Charleston, through which her team called, and received calls from, city residents in order to stay connected.

"It starts with listening and learning," says Goodwin. "As we begin to dig down into the conversation, it's important to ask what we need to do to support those cultural differences? How do we spend money to enhance the cultural needs of our community?"

To this end, Goodwin's team hosted five town hall meetings in different areas of the city. Those meetings generated 4,000 texts, emails, and calls from residents about what they wanted and needed in their community. Findings were developed into a plan of action. "We re-presented back to the community what they gave us, what they wanted to see with their money in their community," says Goodwin. "So, we started again, back to boots on the ground."

PANEL TWO / Q & A

How can we better engage with our youth on race, so we have a generation of kids who are thoughtful and moving us forward? What's your observation and experience?

Adults are the problem, not youth.
Several panelists stated that, in their experience, youth do not have an issue with addressing race. On the contrary, while youth can be a portal to engagement, it's the adults surrounding them that avoid the issue. "Folks who have authority over youth seem to be disengaged, poorly informed, and not well trained," says Kristi Dumas of Dumas Psychology Collective.

Angie Settle is Chief Executive Officer of WV Health Right Inc. The organization's Equahealth program supports youth that identify as LGBTQ. Settle says, "Racism is learned behavior. Children are not born that way, and they're generally loving."

Although West Virginia Wesleyan College is a majority-White campus, student-led conversations reflect an openness to discussing DEI issues, according to Dedriell Taylor. She says that's true whether the students are Black, Asian, international, or queer. "They are very clear in sharing ways that other students can serve as allies for them on campus," says Taylor. "So, I don't think it's the youth who have the problem talking about issues; it's the older generations." Additionally, she says students on campus are very capable of sharing their thoughts and feelings. "Sometimes we just need to catch up to where they are."

Provide resources to engage youth.

- **Exposure.** West Virginia is not a diverse state overall. But within individual communities, like Beckley, diversity can be rich with different churches, religions, heritages, and skin color. In communities with diversity, says Drew McClanahan, "it is much easier to involve youth. Exposure is imperative."

But what about communities, especially in rural areas, that lack access to diversity? It's a steeper climb, says McClanahan, but with a commitment to funding, resources for outreach, time and effort, we can begin to chip away at it. "We cannot create that appreciation for diversity simply by giving someone a book," he says. "We have to have meaningful connections and experiences with people from different backgrounds to really give weight to that relationship."

- **Government.** "My big beef with people who advocate getting the youth engaged and involved in government? It's about more than telling them they should run for office. It's also about helping them build a platform," says Mayor Goodwin. "Tell me what your interests are. Let me help you develop them, and let me financially support you."
- **Relocation.** Goodwin likens the financial support for youth to the Charleston Roots program, which aims to get young people to move back to the City of Charleston. Some grew up in Charleston but moved away with their parents; others may work remotely out of Washington, D.C. and are weary of high rents.

"We've had over 125 applicants for the Charleston Roots program, and when we interview the young folks, one of the first questions they ask us is *how inclusive and diverse has Charleston become?,*" says Mayor Goodwin.

"The older the candidate, the less those questions are asked. But not our youth. It's a requirement and a demand to know. Relocating has very little to do with the $5,000 incentive to move back, which is an important part of the conversation but not an extended part. *It's what do you have for me there?* Community connections were very important to every one of the candidates."

It's important that the youth understand the history of our country, one that has not yet been told. How do we overcome current pressures in education and create standards for our students to learn the full, rich history of America with all its blemishes?

According to a July 2021 article in Chalkbeat, [*https://www.chalkbeat.org/22525983/map-critical-race-theory-legislation-teaching-racism*] a nonprofit news organization that covers education in America, "Efforts to restrict teaching about racism and bias have multiplied across the U.S." In 28 states, including West Virginia, "officials nationwide have raced to enact new laws and introduce new policies meant to shape how students discuss the nation's past—and its present." West Virginia Senate Bill 618, which sought to prohibit the teaching of critical race theory and other "divisive acts" in schools, died in committee in March 2021.

Chalkbeat also tracked 15 states that are trying to expand education on racism and bias, calling recent events a "turning point in American history and education."

Curriculum

Panelists' discussions centered largely around curriculum. Without teaching and understanding the full history of West Virginia and America, "we'll be condemned to repeat it," says Kristi Dumas of Dumas Psychology Collective.

At the college level, students at West Virginia Wesleyan College have demanded that curriculum be more inclusive, according to Dedriell Taylor. "They're telling me they want to learn more about people who look like us and their contributions to the fields that we're pursuing," says Taylor.

In terms of moving from awareness to action, Drew McClanahan of the West Virginia Department of Education says there's more flexibility at his organization with student scheduling at the secondary level in terms of course offerings and graduation requirements—especially from a social studies perspective. He points out, "That's not to lower the standard but to provide more of an opportunity." For instance, the Office of Teaching and Learning is now working on an African American history class that goes beyond general American history. He feels other actions are essential to moving the ball forward.

Recommendations by Drew McClanahan

- Understand that the choice of curriculum relies on local districts. Get involved in conversations with locally elected boards of education to make sure the curriculum that's adopted meets the expectations of your community.
- Train teachers and principals to teach things differently to ensure student engagement and connectivity. "If we look at the standards now," says McClanahan, "the curriculum we can adopt and the topics we can discuss in class are very robust. Unfortunately, at times we rely on the textbook or worksheet because it becomes easy. Sometimes we let school get in the way of education."
    - For example, student discipline is a statewide problem. "The number-one indicator for student discipline in any school is a meaningful engagement structure," says McClanahan. "If we're willing to look at the flexibility we have and really dive into it differently—focusing on how students learn and how we can engage them—I think we can make the classes really fun and engaging."

Continuing education for adults

Mayor Goodwin says that after completing implicit bias training with a group of city directors, she and others realized they did not know as much as they thought they did.

"We're talking about educating the kids, but we still need to do a better job of educating the adults," she said. "We have 778 employees in the City of Charleston. We serve you. We serve the public. We should know all of our public to the best of our ability. Even folks who think they know and understand our history are still missing large gaps."

JUST
NO

PANEL TWO / Q & A

After the Black Lives Matter movement is the situation any better? And how do we or should we measure progress?

Some panelists agreed that matters of racism and equality have not gotten better since the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd. One panelist likened it to a scab being peeled off a deep wound; another compared the situation to a shattering of community that requires starting over from the beginning.

But other panelists saw hope, encouraged by conversations with coworkers, school leaders, people in communities, and by students determined to make change in the world. "No, I don't think necessarily that things have gotten better," says Dedriell Taylor of West Virginia Wesleyan College. "But I think there's hope as long as there are people willing to do the work."

In terms of measuring progress, Drew McClanahan of the West Virginia Department of Education says the good news from an education standpoint is in having plenty of data and indictors to track and examine now and in the future.

Chief Hunt of the Charleston Police Department offers another perspective.

> "I'm going to measure it first and foremost through community relations. How comfortable are the folks in our community speaking to police officers? How comfortable are they in wanting to pursue a career in law enforcement? We've got a lot of work to do there.
>
> "Also, I'm going to look at the degree of measure with crime—because when you have a good relationship with folks in the community, there's going to be more communication, more give and take. There's going to be folks who wouldn't otherwise come forward with information. They're going to take more pride and stake in the area where they live. You as the officer of the folks that you serve, you're going to have that relationship, you're going to care more about that neighborhood. With that, we're going to begin to see improvements. That is how I measure it."

CONCLUSION

Discussions from this Summit on Race Matters indicate that there is continued work to do in all areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. There is no panacea or quick solution to racism. Instead, the approach from awareness to action requires deliberate and intentional strategies, introspection, listening and learning, determination and fortitude to keep going, boots on the ground, when beset by roadblocks. It also appears to require a healthy dose of hope.

We at The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation hope that, because of this conversation, people will learn something they didn't know, continue the conversation, seek out resources, and work toward making our communities and our society a better place for all of us.

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