

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES AMONG BLACK YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN GREATER OMAHA

We recognize that diversity and inclusion are multi-faceted issues and that we need to address opportunities to eliminate disparities holistically to better engage and support all underrepresented groups within business and the community. However, the disparities among African American young professionals in our community command us to look specifically at that group first while setting in motion key changes that will lead to a large emphasis on creating an equal and welcoming Omaha.

We have to change. For us, this means committing to the formation of specific initiatives that we hope will catalyze further conversation and action around diversity and inclusion within the workplace and community, and foster collaboration among many organizations.

The Urban League of Nebraska and Greater Omaha Chamber encourage businesses to undertake their own diversity initiatives beyond these recommendations to make the Omaha community and businesses more welcoming places for native and new African American community members, and people of all races, ethnicities and backgrounds.



Urban League of
Nebraska



Committee Members

Comprised of Greater Omaha Chamber and Urban League of Nebraska Board and Young Professional group members.

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Process Summary

January – March 2017	Survey responses received
April – June 2017	Analysis conducted by UNO STEPs program
June 2017	Presentation of the results to Urban League and Chamber YP groups and boards
August 2017	Committee begins meeting to initiate forming of recommendations
September 2017	Stakeholder input sessions held
October 2017	Community input sessions held
November 2017	Finalization of recommendations and presentation to Urban League of Nebraska and Greater Omaha Chamber groups and boards for approval

Overall Recommendations

- Form a volunteer council/committee with stakeholders from various parts of the community to guide efforts.
- Create and empower a manager position to lead collaborative efforts.

Workplace Recommendations

Establish the Omaha Diversity & Inclusion Pledge, where an employer will commit to:

1. **Join the Omaha Diversity & Inclusion Business Coalition** comprised of employers, diversity and inclusion practitioners, and supported by the Greater Omaha Chamber and Urban League of Nebraska.
2. **Create and implement a comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategy** that
 - Includes workforce and succession plans focused on:
 - i. Diversifying the workforce;
 - ii. Ensuring recruitment and hiring processes are free of discrimination; and
 - iii. Investing in professional development that engages employees of color in career development, advancement and mentorship.
 - Fosters a welcoming and inclusive culture where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected.
3. A. Companies with 1,000 or more local employees: **Hire (or appoint) a full-time diversity & inclusion director at a leadership level** to develop and support diversity and inclusion efforts.
B. Companies with less than 1,000 local employees: **Empower existing staff or a cohort of staff with access to company leadership** to develop and support diversity and inclusion efforts.
4. **Participate in a workplace scorecard** that will inform efforts and identify opportunities to increase diversity and create a culture of inclusion within all levels of their workforce. *Scorecard specifics TBD.*

Community Recommendations

1. **Connect and support African-American young professionals, neighbors and culture (arts/music/entertainment).**
 - Identify ways to **connect community members** and initiatives across Greater Omaha.
 - Highlight **success stories** and **support existing initiatives**.
 - **Initiate conversations** between community members, businesses, and educational and cultural institutions to **build connectivity, collaboration and advocacy partnerships**.
2. **Establish an African-American quality of life scorecard.**
3. **Create networking opportunities and support a mentorship program for African-American young professionals.**
 - Develop a mentorship program for **personal development, leadership development and community engagement**.
 - Working with the Omaha Convention and Visitors Bureau, **attract more African-American cultural events and professional conferences** to Greater Omaha.
 - Bring in **national speakers** of interest and **host professional networking opportunities** with local company leadership.
4. **Help African-American led startups and entrepreneurs grow.**
 - **Connect startups and entrepreneurs** with existing networks and resources for **training, technical assistance and funding**.
 - Initiate **collaboration** between institutions, businesses and incubators to **develop a pipeline for high school and college students** to engage entrepreneurship and startups.