

Kent County  
Office of  
Diversity, Equity  
& Inclusion

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**Teresa L. Branson, MHA**

*October 14, 2021*

*To advance a culture that demonstrates  
diversity, equity and inclusion.*



# Presentation Overview



DEI Timeline



Kent County Core Values & Board Strategic Priorities



DEI Strategic Plan



Significant Accomplishments & Efforts



A Look Ahead

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Timeline

**2000: Kent County Leadership Established a Staff Insight Subcommittee:**

*Study and make recommendations to the BOC*

**2001: Kent County Cultural Insight Council** is formed *(Kent County Board Appointed Committee)*

- *The CIC includes employees from various backgrounds and County departments. The CIC is the hub for providing direction on diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and increasing communication with internal and external stakeholders.*
- **CIC Mission:** *To act as a catalyst to foster a culture which recognizes, accepts and values the individual differences of its employees and is responsive to the changing needs of our diverse community.*

**2003: Kent County Diversity Climate Study**

**2001-2005:** Kent County BOC establish the **Task Force on Health Care for People of Color**  
*(Hires Coordinator to carry out Task Force recommendations)*

**2005: Kent County Invisible Barriers Study**

**2006: Kent County Registers More Women & Minority Suppliers** *(Doubled its base from 2001-2005)*

**2008:** Kent County CIC leadership team engages in **Strategic Diversity Management Planning**

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Timeline

**2016:** **CIC's 15-year Anniversary** and County's formal diversity & inclusion efforts

- *Chairs, Tom Carnegie (past) & Darius Quinn (present)*

**2016-2020:** Kent County develops **new DEI Strategic Plan** - Focus on Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

- Trained 18 Kent County employees to facilitate workshops for all employees.

**2018:** Kent County BOC establish **Strategic Priorities: Inclusive Participation**

**2020:** Kent County Administrator's Office and BOC issue **DEI Statement**

**2021:** Kent County BOC & Administrator's Office create **Kent County's First Chief Inclusion Officer Position**

*In March, the Board approved the establishment of the Chief Inclusion Officer role which will strengthen the coordination of our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. This role will also enhance the County's ability to achieve our strategic priorities.*

# Kent County Cultural Insight Council Members

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- Gerard Akkerhuis
- Hilary Arthur
- Chris Becker
- Teresa Branson
- Matthew Budd
- Natasha Burke
- Michelle Burt
- Rita Caruth
- Kyla Colombel
- Santiago Estrada
- Kara Dalziel
- Chuck Dewitt
- Angela Dolan
- Sangeeta Ghosh
- Kenisha Harris
- Michelle Lajoie-Young

Circuit Court - Case Management  
63rd District Court  
Prosecuting Attorney's Office  
Health Department  
Juvenile Detention  
Friend of the Court  
Fiscal Services  
Prosecuting Attorney's Office  
Health Department  
Veteran's Services  
63rd District Court  
Sheriff's Office  
Circuit Court Services  
Administrator's Office  
63rd District Court  
Sheriff's Office

- Michael Loxterman
- Stacy McGinnis
- Marcela Morales-Morris
- Lynette Pearson
- Darius Quinn
- Micheal Remo
- Cynthia Robinson
- Huemartin Robinson
- Juan Rosario
- Darrell Singleton Jr.
- Julie Taylor
- Julie Vredevelde
- LaSchelle Walton

Information Technology  
Juvenile Detention  
Circuit Court - Family Division  
Circuit Court - Family Division  
Human Resources  
Circuit Court - Family Division  
Information Technology  
Juvenile Detention  
Friend of the Court  
Kent County Community Action Agency  
Health Department  
Friend of the Court  
Friend of the Court

# Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is the capability to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations.

**CQ CAPABILITIES**  
CQ includes four capabilities:



*1700+ Employees Trained in  
Cultural Intelligence*

**Thanks to our Kent County Certified CQ &  
Unconscious Bias Facilitators:**

- **Karyn Pelon, KCHD**
- **Donna Moore-Brown, KCSD**
- **Tracie Eckhardt, HR**
- **Huemartin Robinson**
- **Stephanie Hernandez, HR**
- **Mike Remo, Circuit Court**
- **MB Van Till, IT**
- **Claudia Aguilera, FOC**
- **Tasha Broy, Prosecuting Attorney's Office**
- **Tamber Bustance, HR**
- **Teresa Branson, Administrator's Office**
- **Tom Raymond, KCSD**
- **Marcela Morris-Moralez, Circuit Court**
- **Pete Gerkin, KCSD**
- **Darius Quinn, HR**
- \* **Jeffrey Pavlovic, Matthew Clark & Jason Richards**  
*New KCSD Facilitators*



## Kent County Values

### **Act with integrity**

Treat each other with respect and dignity  
Hold yourself accountable  
Honor and keep commitments to one another  
Be Transparent

### **Serve as responsible stewards of County resources**

Work efficiently to get great results  
Be innovative/creative  
Ensure fiscal responsibility

### **Provide high-quality service to internal and external customers**

Be passionate about service  
Provide and seek active feedback/input  
Communicate the right thing, at the right time, the right way, to the right people  
Solve problems  
Do your best to exceed customer expectations

### **Work collaboratively**

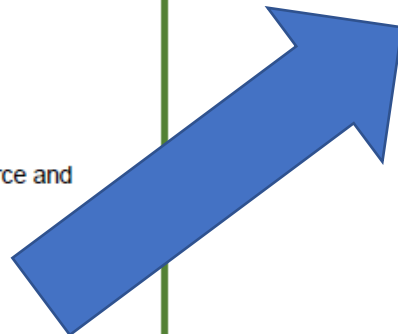
Seek to understand and value others' point of view  
Work together to establish and achieve shared goals  
Encourage others to be engaged and involved  
Understand our collective roles and responsibilities

### **Embrace diversity, equity and inclusion**

Leverage the many unique talents and strengths that exist in our workforce and community  
Value differences that exist in our workforce and community  
Set an example for others in the community to follow

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# Kent County Strategic Priorities

## **1. Economic Prosperity**

Focus on sound fiscal management and policies to support the economic prosperity of the County and the West Michigan region.

## **2. High Quality of Life**

Foster a high quality of life that promotes safe and healthy communities, strategic growth, and world-class outdoor resources.

## **3. Excellence in Service Delivery**

Adopt innovative ways to deliver services that maximize efficiency and provide an exceptional experience to those we serve.

## **4. Inclusive Participation**

**Provide innovative and inclusive ways to engage residents and involve them in County government.**

### **Goals:**

- 1. Provide our residents with equitable access to efficient, effective, and culturally responsive services**
- 2. Intentionally incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in our service delivery**
- 3. Recruit and retain a qualified, diverse workforce that reflects our continually changing community**

## **5. Effective Communications**

Be transparent and clear in the communications and decisions of the County.

# DEI Strategic Plan: 2016-2020

## MISSION STATEMENT:

*To advance a culture that demonstrates diversity, equity and inclusion.*

## Five Key Perspectives:

- Leadership Commitment
- Access & Equity
- Multicultural & Inclusive Organizational Climate
- Learning & Diversity
- Community Engagement & Partnership

# DEI Strategic Plan: Guiding Framework



# DEI Strategic Plan: Accomplishments

## Kent County Performance: 2016-2020

- 18 employees certified on CQ & Managing Unconscious Bias
  - 1700+ County employees completed CQ training
    - *CQ E-learning training completed for 24/7 environments*
    - *All new County hires complete a CQ assessment and Introduction to CQ during orientation*
- CQ framework integrated into management performance review process
- Community engagement by the BOC to adopt best practices to attract diverse applicants and improve the inclusiveness of citizen boards and committees
- Elevated Kent County's values and organization expectations related to DEI
- Implementation of HireReach, *(Evidence-based selection process to improve hiring decisions)*
- Community engagement and outreach initiatives to attract & recruit diverse candidates
- Policy review for DEI opportunities
- 75+ staff engaged in a Managing Unconscious Bias workshop, representing 12 Departments *(Administrator's Office, KCSD, KCHD, DPW, Circuit Court, HR, Veteran's Department, FOC, IT, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Equalization Department, KCCA)*

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: COVID-19

- Work Teams: *Kent County IC Team, DEI Team, Ethics & Health Equity Advisory Work Team, Community Coordinated Vaccination Planning Team, Communications, Outreach, Data Team, Data Dashboard, Community Connectors, Contact Tracing, Testing & Vaccination, Strike Teams, Unhoused & Vulnerable Populations Work Groups, Employer and Employee Support Teams and more.*
- Kent County Administrator & BOC issue DEI Statement
- County Departments work to advance DEI Performance Measures
- CQ Virtual Training
- Engagement of businesses, local government leaders, community partners, schools, law enforcement, every sector

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Efforts: Current

**DEI Community Engagement & Outreach Partners:** LatinxGR, Black Impact Collaborative, West Michigan Asian American Association, GRAAHI, Association of Blind & Visually Impaired, Urban Core Collective, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services, Disability Advocates of Kent County, Treetops Collective, Pride Center, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, West Michigan Friendship Center, Area Agency on Aging of West Michigan, Kent Count Faith-Leaders & Neighborhood Partnership Team and More.

## **Learning & Development Opportunities:**

- CQ, Managing Unconscious Bias, & Building Belonging with Words

**Gateways for Growth Welcome Plan:** 1) Civic Engagement 2) Economic Development 3) Education 4) Equitable access to services 5) Safe & Connected Communities

## **Kent County DEI Pulse Newsletter** (*BOC, Employees & Community*)

- Kent County Purchasing Pure Michigan Event, KCSD Pilot Latinx Police Academy, KCCA CERA

## **Talent 2025: D&I Benchmark Survey:** *Diversity Demographics & Best Practices*

*A tool for measuring the impact of a company's efforts, offering comparisons by industry and company size. Data collected helps provide insight into West Michigan's growing populations in the workforce, while preserving confidential company details and scores.*

# A Look Ahead

**Strategic Planning,  
Alignment & Support  
Infrastructure**

**Kent County Engagement**

**Kent County DEI Toolkit  
(Best Practice)**

**Community Engagement,  
Outreach & Strategic  
Partnerships**

**DEI Metrics**

**Develop DEI Strategic Plan  
for 2022**

**County Department  
Directors Elected Officials,  
Citizen Boards,  
Commissions, Advisory  
Groups**

**Adopt Equity framework –  
GARE  
Equity Organizational  
Assessment**

**Adopt a Community  
Engagement Model  
DEI Community  
Stakeholders Group**

**DEI & CQ staff  
performance reviews**

**Kent County Cultural  
Insight Council & DEI  
Champions**

**Equity Learning Labs  
Managing Bias & CQ  
Material Review  
Guidelines**

**Communications  
DEI Pulse News  
Social Media**

**Enhance Data Science &  
Transparency**



# Thank you

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