

# County Council of Cuyahoga County, Ohio

## Ordinance No. O2012-0014

Sponsored by: <b>Councilmembers Conwell, Miller, Rogers, Brady, Connally, Jones and Germana</b>	<b>An Ordinance</b> adopting an Equity Plan for Cuyahoga County.
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WHEREAS, the Preamble of the Charter of Cuyahoga County states that one benefit of a reformed Cuyahoga County government should be "an improved focus on equity for all our communities and citizens;" and

WHEREAS, Cuyahoga County desires to demonstrate such a focus on equity in its internal operations and in the manner in which the County promotes the economic, educational, health and social progress of the county and its residents; and

WHEREAS, implementation of a focused, well-defined approach to equity in Cuyahoga County is necessary for successful performance of the County's economic development role as stated in Article 7, Section 1 of the Cuyahoga County Charter that "the County shall have as a primary responsibility the promotion of the economic well-being and prosperity of the County and all of its residents;" and

WHEREAS, Article 12, Section 7 of the Cuyahoga County Charter states that "[i]t shall be the policy of the County that

- (1) all officers and members of boards, agencies, commissions and authorities appointed by the County Executive, the Council or other County elected officials;
- (2) all members of each Charter Review Commission; and
- (3) all County employees

shall be appointed, employed, promoted, and compensated without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, or ancestry;" and

WHEREAS, Article 9, Section 4 requires that all "Appointing Authorities shall strive in making appointments in both the classified and the unclassified service to ensure that the diversity of the population of the County is reflected in the persons who are employed by the County."

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF  
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO:**



# Cuyahoga County Equity Plan

Introduction: This Cuyahoga County Equity Plan includes two main parts. Sections 1-3 are an aspirational statement, setting forth our vision as to what a successful equity program for our county would consist of and how it would be achieved. Sections 4-6 provide for the implementation of specific actions to help achieve the goals set forth in the prior sections.

## I. VISION OF EQUITY

Purpose: Cuyahoga County embraces the ideal of one united community, committed to equality of opportunity for all of our citizens. As part of our equity plan, the county's objective is to remove barriers and enable all citizens in our community to have equal opportunities to fulfill their potential. The county will do so by ensuring that best practices in equity are being implemented by all county departments and agencies and by measuring progress on an ongoing basis. In addition, the county will work with community partners to influence other important domains that reinforce the economic, educational, health and social progress of Cuyahoga County and its citizens.

Definition of Equity – Equity is fairness, justice and inclusion by and among people and across all social, economic, and political classifications regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation including gender identity, disability, age, or ancestry. An equitable community is a fair, just and healthy community, one that cares that income, race, and neighborhood are often major predictors of high school graduation rates, incarceration rates, general health and life expectancy. An equitable community is a connected community, one that links more people to better opportunities – among those being job opportunities, educational opportunities, business development and wellness opportunities.

## II. DOMAINS OF EQUITY

Promoting equity requires efforts in many domains. Some of these domains relate to internal county department and agency operations; others revolve around external areas over which the county may exert influence. Many domains involve both internal and external operations and influences. Areas over which the county expects to require or influence equity efforts include:

Human Resources: Hiring and Promotion: Consistent with the county's equal opportunity policies, Cuyahoga County will be an employer committed to equity and diversity in all of its employment practices, with an emphasis on equity, merit, and diversity in hiring and promotion in accordance with Section 9.04 of the Cuyahoga County Charter.

Health and Human Services: Cuyahoga County will work towards ensuring that access to basic health and human services offered by the county is available based on need, promoting health and wellness initiatives for its employees and citizens; and supporting area organizations that contribute to a healthy community.

Contracting & Procurement: When issuing competitive bid requests/request for proposals or qualifications and when purchasing services, Cuyahoga County will strive to encourage and invite participation by qualified vendors from all geographic parts of the county, including minority, female, and small business enterprises.

Public Works and Infrastructure: Cuyahoga County plans to prioritize projects that are most needed in order to promote safety, inclusion and economic development across the county when determining the schedule and location of public works and infrastructure projects.

Public Safety and Justice Services: Cuyahoga County will provide access to a public safety and justice system that is fair to all of our citizens. Justice system advocacy efforts will ensure that victims are treated with compassion. To the extent permitted by grant conditions and guidelines, the County will award public safety grants based on overall community needs. Emergency management coordination will ensure that all areas of the county are involved in planning, preparedness and response.

Partnerships & Public Participation: Cuyahoga County will work with public and private partners, including local governments, businesses, institutions and organizations to promote the county as a place of inclusion, fairness, health and economic growth.

Education: Cuyahoga County will encourage, promote and support efforts to improve our educational system from early childhood through college and beyond. The county will encourage efforts designed to ensure that citizens have access to resources that improve skills and contribute to lifelong learning.

Economic Development: In accordance with the County's approved Economic Development Plan, Cuyahoga County will strengthen its collaboration with all County stakeholders, coordinating its economic development efforts through productive and transformative partnerships. The county will consider how it allocates resources, balancing factors, including the efficient use of resources, in areas of greatest need and on issues that require immediate attention.

Workforce Development: Cuyahoga County will foster job and vocation preparation, with a view to increasing employment opportunities and labor force participation for our residents, particularly among the poor and marginalized in our community.

Environmental: Cuyahoga County will demonstrate a commitment to a sustainable community, one that appreciates its natural assets and seeks to preserve those assets for future generations.

Any and all actions taken by the County to promote any of these objectives shall be done subject to and in accordance with all legal requirements, including all applicable state and federal laws and the Cuyahoga County Charter.

### **III. EQUITY GOALS/VALUES**

Cuyahoga County will establish equity objectives reflecting the following values:

Inclusiveness: Cuyahoga County seeks to be a place of welcome for all people, encouraging interaction across the geographic and economic sectors of the county, and reflecting the diversity of cultures among us.

Comprehensiveness: Cuyahoga County will promote equity across all the domains, both internal and external, setting an example for both public and private partners.

Collaboration: Partnerships among the county and other political subdivisions, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations, and other community institutions will be the norm as the county acts on this equity plan.

Community Outreach: Cuyahoga County will demonstrate efforts to reach out to the entire community when acting under this equity plan.

Measurement, Reporting & Transparency: As the county acts in the domains and reflects the values expressed in this equity plan, it will develop a system for collecting, recording, analyzing, encouraging community participation and publicly reporting information regarding the County's policies and initiatives in the area of equity through transparent and accountable means based on objective data and benchmarks.

#### **IV. CUYAHOGA COUNTY EQUITY COMMISSION**

Composition: To oversee the County's equity efforts, there shall be a Cuyahoga County Equity Commission consisting of the Directors of Development, Human Resources, Health and Human Services, Procurement & Diversity, and Public Safety and Justice Services, or their respective designees. The County shall use its internal resources to assist the Equity Commission with data collection and analysis.

Leadership and Staffing: The County Executive shall designate a Chairperson of the Commission and shall provide staff resources sufficient for the Commission to fulfill its duties.

Duties: The Commission's duties shall include:

- a. Developing and implementing a system for the collection of baseline equity data relating to the domains and goals/values of this equity plan
- b. Developing equity plan objectives, after collection of baseline data and completion of a disparity study
- c. Assisting departments and agencies in developing and implementing equity plans, including objectives, measurement of outcomes, and revision of objectives when needed. When feasible, the Commission shall collaborate with county boards and commissions in developing and implementing equity plans.
- d. Coordinating with the Citizens' Advisory Council on Equity
- e. Developing and implementing a plan for community outreach on equity
- f. Maintaining a page on the County's website to provide information on its activities
- g. Issuing an Annual Equity Report not later than January 31.

## **V. CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EQUITY**

Composition: The Citizens' Advisory Council on Equity shall be composed of fifteen (15) citizens, appointed by the Executive, and confirmed by Council, of which not more than three (3) may be employees of Cuyahoga County. The County Executive and the Council shall use good faith efforts to reflect the diversity of the people of the County in appointing the members of the Citizens' Advisory Council on Equity. Members will serve without compensation, except for actual expenses.

Leadership and Staffing: The Council shall choose its own leaders and develop its own rules of procedure, consistent with this ordinance, other County ordinances, and the County Charter. The Executive shall provide staff support as needed.

Duties: The Council's duties shall include:

- a. Acting as a resource for information and advice for the Equity Commission
- b. Encouraging community outreach and public participation in the development of equity goals, strategies and programs
- c. Providing recommendations and input to the Executive and Council regarding the development of equity goals, strategies and programs
- d. Meeting publicly on a quarterly basis to provide a forum for the public to offer ideas and recommendations regarding equity, and to hear and discuss updates on the progress of actions undertaken by the Cuyahoga County Equity Commission
- e. Providing a semi-annual report of recommendations for policies and programs from the Advisory Council and collected from the public regarding equity to the Executive and the Council. This report shall also be made available to the public online.

## **VI. ANNUAL EQUITY REPORT**

The annual equity report shall include, at a minimum:

- a. a review and summary of the County's equity initiatives, organized by domain
- b. a summary of where and how resources dedicated to equity initiatives were allocated
- c. an analysis of equity results as measured against benchmarks
- d. a description of how the county collected the reported data and made it accessible to the public
- e. an update on benchmarks and a description of changes in equity initiatives for the coming year