

# News Release



**Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Summit County Executive Creates Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion**

On Thursday, August 10, 2017, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro was joined by leaders from across Summit County's business, non-profit, religious, and services community for the inaugural meeting of the Summit County Executive's Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion. The Advisory Council, comprised of 30 members, is the first of its kind for Summit County and will meet regularly to discuss the County's initiatives and practices relating to employment, contracting and purchasing, representation on commissions and boards, and community engagement.

"The individuals on this Advisory Council represent the diversity of Summit County's residents, and they share my commitment that the County be inclusive of all people, regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity," said Executive Shapiro. In addition to the four stated objectives, the Advisory Council may be asked to advise on other areas of County government where improved diversity and inclusiveness will make County government more responsive and effective. It is anticipated that the Advisory Council will make recommendations relevant to the County's practices, policies and procedures to ensure the County continues to be a more diverse and inclusive employer, institution, partner and leader.

One of the Advisory Council's first undertakings will be a review of the boards and commissions to which the Executive appoints members. The Advisory Council will be asked to make suggestions to strengthen board membership and new member selection. "Promoting diversity also promotes strength," said Laurie Cramer, Director of The Autism Society of Greater Akron and Board Member. "By broadening inclusion within hiring processes and beyond, Summit County will benefit from a much more extensive range of skills and knowledge that transcends barriers and borders ultimately building a stronger foundation for economic development."

The Advisory Council will also assist the Executive in evaluating the preference program in contracting for minority and women owned businesses. While the County has a program providing preference to historically disadvantaged businesses, in the past it has been rarely utilized. "The creation of the Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion is a powerful step forward," said Dr. Sadie Winlock, President of Akron Urban League and Council Member. "The Akron Urban League looks forward to being a part of this tremendous opportunity to develop diversity initiatives within our communities."

Summit County Councilmembers Elizabeth Walters and David Hamilton will serve as liaisons to assist the Advisory Council. "I am grateful that the Advisory Council Members are committing their time to helping move our community forward in an inclusive manner that not only acknowledges diversity, but celebrates, and promotes it," said Executive Shapiro. "I would also like to thank Councilmembers Walters and Hamilton for helping to identify such a knowledgeable and diverse group of community leaders to serve on the Advisory Council."

The creation of the Council is the fulfillment of a campaign promise made by Executive Shapiro in last year's race for County Executive. She promised to take steps to ensure that the County's employees, contractors and boards and commissions reflect the diversity of the people of Summit County. Earlier this year, Executive Shapiro also began a management training program within her Department of Job and Family Services to provide employees with diverse backgrounds the skills they need to be successful supervisors for the County.

The Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion will meet again on October 5, 2017. Attached to this Release is a summary of the purpose, goals, and objectives of the Advisory Council and a list of its members.

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## Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro's Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion

Summit County is a collection of communities and people that are diverse in culture, heritage, background, experience, ability and identity. County Executive Ilene Shapiro believes that her office, and County government as a whole, should reflect the diversity of the residents of Summit County and should provide opportunity for all of its residents. Even though the County government consists of many independently elected officials, Executive Shapiro believes that a broader discussion on diversity will benefit all areas of the government. Additionally, because the County is one of the community's anchor institutions, Executive Shapiro wants to lead by example through ensuring that the County is a diverse cross-section of its population. For that reason, Executive Shapiro has created the County of Summit's first **Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion**.

The Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion will be tasked with advising on the County's practices, policies and procedures in the areas of (i) employment, (ii) contracting and purchasing, (iii) representation on County-appointed boards and commissions, and (iv) community engagement and involvement. Additionally, the Advisory Council may advise on other areas of County government where improved diversity and inclusiveness will make County government more responsive and effective. It is anticipated that the Advisory Council will make certain recommendations to the County's practices, policies and procedures in order to ensure the County continues to be a more diverse and inclusive employer, institution, partner and leader.

**Employment:** The County of Summit employs more than 2,800 full-time employees, making it the 5<sup>th</sup> largest employer in the Summit County. The County's hiring practices must continue to encourage a diverse workforce and an environment where all qualified Summit County residents desiring to work for the County are considered.

**Contracting and Purchasing:** The various offices, agencies and departments of the County contract with hundreds of vendors annually, many of whom are located in Summit County. While the County provides a preference program for minority-owned and women-owned businesses, Executive Shapiro would like to further evaluate this program and look at other possible avenues to ensure that the County is contracting with a diverse network of vendors.

**Representation on Boards and Commissions:** The County Executive appoints members to 51 boards and commissions that oversee everything from services for the developmentally disabled to one of the highest-rated library systems in the country. The Advisory Council will review the membership and appointing process for these boards and commissions to ensure that the appointments remain inclusive and diverse based on the respective boards' membership criteria.

**Community Engagement and Involvement:** The Advisory Council will review the County's role in engaging different and diverse communities within the County and ensuring that those communities all have a voice in County government. Additionally, the Advisory Council will work toward furthering the County's role and involvement in community organizations that reflect the diverse interests of the residents of Summit County.

The members of the Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion were selected with the intention of representing the diversity of Summit County's residents, and Executive Shapiro's commitment that the County be inclusive of all people, regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity. Below are the initial members of the Advisory Council.

**Initial Members of County Executive Ilene Shapiro's  
Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion**

Dr. Sadie Winlock - Akron Urban League  
Billy O'Quinn - Goodyear Tire and Rubber  
Lisa Kamlowsky - Summit DD Board  
Bishop Joey Johnson - Bishop FJ Johnson Ministries  
Judi Hill - Akron NAACP  
Dr. Diana Swoope - Arlington Church of God  
Rabbi Josh Brown - Temple Israel  
Imam Nader Taha - Akron Islamic Center  
Sandy Selby - Tough Work Outreach  
Mark Ford - Love Akron  
Malcolm Costa - Akron Summit Community Action  
Giovonni Santiago - Meta Center, Inc.  
Halle Jones Capers - G. Stephens Inc.  
Joe Grieco - Garfield/Ellet JROTC  
Mark Douglas - Building Trades Council  
Laurie Cramer - Autism Society of Greater Akron  
Bob Lanier - Black Pages of Ohio/Summit Magazine  
Monique Harris - AxessPointe Health  
Dina Younis - GAR Foundation  
Sharlene Chesnes - InterChez  
Dr. Cynthia Capers - Retired, University of Akron  
Fred Berry - Humility of Mary Housing  
Don Mullen - Stark State University  
Jolene Lane - University of Akron  
Annal Vyas - University of Akron  
Cindy Christman - Retired, Akron Police Department  
Torey Tolson - First Energy  
Evis Brinson  
John Williams - Alpha Phi Alpha

***~ Together, we can ensure that ALL people in Summit County are represented and included. ~***