Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

ULI District Councils Models

January 2021

ULI District Councils have taken on the mantle of DEI with great commitment, and significant strides have been made by the network over the course of the last year.

A recent survey showed that:

• 84% of DCs now have a DEI task force or committee compared to only 20% in 2019.
• Representation of BIPOC members on Management Committees has remained stable at 65% (2019; 64%).

The survey also showed a commitment to the training of Management Committee members. Forty percent of DCs have held or plan to hold DEI training for their Management Committees. And the breadth and depth of programs offered by District Councils have also grown over the recent past. In addition to the more well-known REDI and Pathways to Inclusion programs, the following offers a glimpse into some of the innovative offerings that are continuing to move the needle.

Strategy

Member Listening Sessions
ULI Atlanta adopted a holistic approach to its DEI efforts, which included hosting three member listening sessions to discuss DEI in ULI and the industry. The results included: creating a DEI Steering Committee to help outline Atlanta’s top DEI priorities to be implemented and made part of Atlanta’s strategic plan; hosting programs to expand members knowledge which included the Color of Law and Community Development – Partners in Equitable Development; and hosting an Unconscious Bias Training and other diversity workshops in collaboration with ULI Charlotte.

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DEI Action Plan
ULI Colorado created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan, which was developed as result of a comprehensive set of activities, including: a special DEI session with its 25-member Executive Committee; a focus group and written surveys with 20 graduates of the Real Estate Diversity Initiative (REDI); a focus group and written surveys with 20 established land use professionals who are people of color; a review of emerging DEI best practices throughout the ULI network; and original research including one-on-one interviews. The five-part DEI Action Plan proposes actions in several areas including: creation of a DEI Action Committee and DEI Champions within each committee; membership development initiatives; creating partnerships for systemic impact; delivering programming to promote equitable development; and leveraging and expanding the REDI program.

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Real Estate Investment Opportunities

Yield Program
ULI Chicago and LISC Chicago partnered to address the lack of diversity in commercial real estate development, and created the Yield Program. Modeled after ULI’s Product Councils, the Yield Cohort shares experiences, leverages relationships, discusses challenges and opportunities around development, and builds valuable connections. The first Yield Cohort was comprised of 24 members, 63% of whom were persons of color and 29% of whom were women. Yield includes emerging and seasoned real estate professionals who share best practices and work together to further actionable neighborhood-based commercial real estate projects. Every member of the Cohort has developed, or is in the process of developing, projects throughout Chicago. The Cohort will continue to meet over a two-year period.

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Urban Marketplace
ULI Los Angeles hosted its 20th Anniversary Urban Marketplace with the theme of “A Reflection on Progress and a Vision for the Future.” The program promotes Los Angeles real estate investment opportunities and development strategies in underserved communities and attracts real estate industry leaders, elected officials, policymakers, developers, planners, and dealmakers to “Make a Deal, Make a Difference.” The program included a discussion by a highly diverse selection of private, public, and academic sector leaders – including California State Senator Scott Wiener – highlighting Urban Marketplace’s 20 years of making a difference. Other topics included capital access, shelter and zoning, and anticipating the future and provided a platform to showcase efforts in five regional cities.

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**Community Conversations**

**21-Day Equitable Challenge**
ULI Memphis hosted a 21-Day Equitable Challenge. The goal was to encourage spending time personally reflecting and in groups identifying actions to take individually, at their organizations, and as a community to address the inequities in the real estate industry. For three weeks, participants received a weekly email with a list of articles, blogs, videos, etc. and they were encouraged to complete seven items each week – one of which was a discussion group. Each week had a theme. "Week One – Doing the Work: Educating Myself" included resources to bring awareness to individuals about the roles we play. "Week Two – The Role of the National Real Estate Industry" focused on the impact the real estate industry played and continues to play in getting us where we are today. "Week Three – Here in Memphis" included local content such as a redlining map and a tour of neighborhoods to observe the impact of redlining today, which was very powerful for participants. Ninety-six people took the Challenge and the discussion group feedback informed ULI Memphis' Fall programming.

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**Building a More Diverse Nashville**
ULI Nashville’s diversity activities have focused on “Building a More Diverse Nashville.” ULI Nashville and its program partners started the community conversation by successfully hosting “A Fishbowl Conversation: Exploring the Balance Between Economic Development, Gentrification, and Displacement.” Building on the foundation of the Fishbowl, the council launched “Face-to-Face,” a series of small-group discussions of 6-8 participants to continue to exchange honest conversation among the new partners. The goal of ULI Nashville's Face to Face virtual series and its associated DEI initiatives was to help build a better Nashville by: listening and building trust and understanding among new partners; learning about inclusion, equity, and discrimination in real estate and around the city; and proposing action steps to address historic and current obstacles to equitable and affordable development and planning. This platform for change required engagement of ULI Nashville members and welcoming non-members, especially non-traditional participants in ULI Nashville, and multiple non-profits and city partners in this initiative.

**ULI Nashville**
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**Education**

**Leadership for Change**
ULI Northwest has developed Leadership for Change, an online learning course and community created exclusively for current and past participants of the Center for Leadership and launched in January 2021. Leadership for Change seeks to develop the next generation of real estate and land use leaders during this pivotal moment in history. The program will focus specifically on developing core competencies that are required for real estate leaders to successfully navigate change and acknowledge and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their organizations and communities. The economic, social, and political turmoil of the past year have challenged leaders in more ways than ever before. In Leadership for Change, participants will advance their inter-disciplinary problem solving and leadership skills while building a peer network of leaders from the public, non-profit, and private sectors.

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**Diversity, Inclusion and Social Equity Webinar Series**
ULI Utah presented a webinar series on diversity, inclusion, and social equity in land use. Session 1 was entitled “Past-Present-Future: Lessons We Can Learn from Our Industry’s Past as We Build a More Equitable Future.” This session shared the history of residential segregation locally, including the practice of redlining, and research on the legacy of redlining in Salt Lake City. It showed that residents of neighborhoods that were redlined continue to suffer the effects of disinvestment and discrimination long after these government policies were repealed. It also showed how creative placemaking can help achieve equitable development for the future. Session 2, “Inclusive Leadership: How the Best Leaders Build Diverse and Winning Teams,” built on the lessons learned from Session 1 to conduct a training program for ULI Utah leaders. Leaders need new skills that inspire their current and future workforce. An expert from InclusionPro®, trained ULI Utah leaders on the art of inclusive leadership. The inclusive leader inspires higher team performance, greater innovation, more equitable cultures, and more engaged community partners. This highly interactive training session had specific focus on the leadership mindset and communication skills.

**ULI Utah**
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**Research**

**Equity Research Project**
In response to the murder of George Floyd and subsequent protests, ULI Philadelphia, in partnership with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and Temple University, wanted to examine the complex array of benefits and burdens that transportation infrastructure investments and land use policies have on communities. The Equity Research Project consists of a case study-based retrospective of two or more major transportation infrastructure projects in the Philadelphia region spanning multiple decades and land use policy contexts, highlighting the successes, missed opportunities, barriers, and mistakes of the past, and their lingering effects on communities. Each case study focuses on the federal and state legislative, statutory, and regulatory (i.e. policy) environment and the political context(s) in which the project was developed. Comparing case studies over time will allow the student-led teams to make observations on whether changes to project regulatory environments results in more inclusive projects with more equitable outcomes or not. The project will culminate in a written report and presentation to a broad audience including ULI members, providing a history of case study transportation project(s) and land use policies summarizing the students’ findings and policy recommendations for the future.

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