

Cuyahoga County Equity Commission Meeting  
May 15, 2025, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM  
Cuyahoga County Administrative Building – Room 5-006  
2079 East Ninth Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Cleveland, OH 44115

| Cuyahoga County Equity Commission |            |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| Last Name                         | First Name | Agency                             |
| Murray                            | Chris      | Health and Human Services          |
| Lockett                           | Lenora     | Department of Equity & Inclusion   |
| Smialek                           | Jill       | Public Safety and Justice Services |
| Johnson                           | Vaughn     | Department of Development          |
| Nemastil                          | Sarah      | Human Resources                    |
| Guests                            |            |                                    |
| Dixon                             | Jasmine    | ECDI                               |
| Liatos                            | Nicole     | ECDI                               |
| Herdeg                            | Paul       | Department of Development          |
| Kinney                            | Aaron      | Department of Development          |
| Denton                            | Cheryl     | Clerk of Courts                    |
| Ingram                            | Leah       | Department of Equity and Inclusion |
| Wilson                            | Jennifer   | Department of Equity and Inclusion |

- I. Welcome
- II. Call to Order (10:00 am) Lenora Lockett
  - i. Roll call completed; previous minutes reviewed and approved.
  - ii. Call for Review & Approval of Minutes made by Lenora Lockett.
    - Minutes approved: Motion to approve made by Sarah Nemastil, seconded by Vaughn Johnson.
- III. Public Comment
  - There was no public comment.
- IV. Opening Remarks from Equity Commission Members
  - i. - Paul Herdig with Department of Development gave an update on the small investment of county funds that was made two years ago with the organization Cleveland Builds affiliated with the Construction Employers Association. Last year's results show there were 270 Cuyahoga County residents that took part in pre-apprenticeship programs. Out of the 270 residents-71% were black indigenous or persons of color. 77% of black, indigenous or persons of color were placed in paid apprenticeship programs. Also, he noted women have been

underrepresented in construction trades and 25% of those trained and 26% of those placed were women. The county funding was able to support some measurable progress in diversifying and improving participation in the building trades. Vaughn Johnson with Department of Development continued with introducing one of the Capital Partners-ECDI Jasmine Dixon and Nicole Liatos who will be giving a presentation on how they have been able to leverage county funds to help MBEs. Vaughn Johnson also shared the Department of Development's continued work with MBE developers. There are two MBE developers in the pipeline for economic development loans which are with two significant projects. Hope to see those come forward in some additional meetings, no details to share as the projects are still in discussion. Lastly, The Office of Small Business has celebrated being up and running for one year. Since the launch in May 2024 over 800 business have reached out for assistance, 700 of those are minority and women owned. Forty-Three of those businesses have received about \$1.5 million dollars, thirty of those businesses are minority. Lastly, MBE's and WBE's have received over \$2,500 hours of technical assistance. They plan to finish the year with over 1,200 small businesses helped and expanded their resource partners from 60 to 65.

- ii. - Jill Smialek with Public Safety and Justice Services has been working on a few initiatives, one in particular called the Public Safety Spotlight Series. The spotlight series is a 30-minute speaker series that is virtual. The idea is to get the word out on what services Cuyahoga County can provide. Also, how they can support public safety agencies across the community in becoming community oriented and learning how the department can support them in outreach activities. The 1<sup>st</sup> event is a focus on preparing for summer events. A lot of cities sponsor family and community days, and the department wants to make sure there is a public safety presence and it's approachable and efficient. The upcoming events in the series will focus on things like Amber Alerts, victim's rights, and protection orders. The department has celebrated ten years of service at the family justice center. The Family Justice Center is a walk-in service for victims of crime that is more approachable, easy to come in and talk to someone about your options. Over 12,000 families have been served in the 10 years they have been up and running. The County Executive declared with a proclamation Family Justice Center Day in Cuyahoga county which was a great way to acknowledge the hard work put into the center. Recently, the department celebrated the seventh year of the Camp Hope model which is a summer camp program for kids who have been exposed to violence. Trauma exposure ranges from child abuse and domestic violence, to losing a parent to homicide or witnessing a homicide. It occurs the end July to early august. Lastly, they are working on increasing diversity in the public safety field which includes an initiative to address it. A lot of progress has been made, especially with the department of IT who is going to

develop the website. Hope to start at the beginning of the school year, various high schools will have a tool they can use.

- iii. – Chris Murray with Health and Human Services, explained the department had the first Human Services Resource Fair of the season. Which is part of continued effort to get services to clients faster and eliminate travel barriers or any reasons why individuals may not know what programs they offer. It was held at Cleveland Heights Community Center. Vendors ranged from health insurance brokers to organizations that assist with adoption, reading levels, JFS cases. It was a success and additional resource fairs will continue throughout the season. The campus is the next big initiative to start construction that will help the children in the community. It will be serving children that are qualified to be in the facility so more on that to come and more on that share. Lastly, internally they have returned the initiative of crucial conversations with their own individual employees. The goal is to create better teamwork amongst their own staff that will provide better service. In order to do that, they need to know each other, and they need to be comfortable with differences. Working together and acknowledge what makes the difference. Crucial conversations are to restart May 29th and they're looking forward to getting there. Vaughn Johnson with Development asked would the crucial conversations have the same format as before? Chris Murray continued with it will look a little bit different this time than before when they rolled out of original format, we actually expanded the time frames because the interest is high. No change to the format because there hasn't been a need to do so. We want to make it we want to make this an easy onboarding process for our staff and our team it's almost like a Wellness opportunity for the team.
- iv. -Sarah Nemastil with Human Resources started by providing information on Wellness May which is actually Mental Health Awareness month. As an organization they need to encourage open communication about mental health and also to do their part to educate our employees about resources that are available to them particularly our employee assistance program. The department has a great program facilitated through Moore Counseling and Mediation Services. They're also doing a bit of a focus on mental health and wellness this month so she will have a monthly EAP webinar series for may facilitated by Moore Counseling with a mental health focus. A mental health resiliency webinar is scheduled for this afternoon. Updates from the department include that they are continuing to focus on pay in 2025. In late 2023 they engaged a consultant to do pay equity study for our non-bargaining classified staff and did complete their study and recommended pay adjustments for our non-bargaining classified staff. Those adjustments were made, and what they're focusing on now

in 2025 is contracting with a vendor to help establish a true compensation philosophy for the county. Also, related policies and procedures to make pay transparent. That is the main goal, so people understand why they are paid what they are paid, and they understand the process that was undertaken. They are working on doing focus groups with leadership over the next month with their consultant and will continue with civility training program, a civil treatment for employees for 2025. There cannot be inclusivity if there is no civility, so they will try to keep that going. Sarah continued with: I encourage employees to sign up if they haven't signed up yet and our internal DEI committee for HR hosted a panel discussion recently on mentoring called mentor's matter. The discussion was a talk about two mentoring opportunities that we are encouraging county employees to participate in the True Humanity Program for students and college now. It was a great panel discussion, and we had several of our own colleagues who have served as mentors professionally. An employee who is an alumni from college now who was a mentee, so it was really great to hear from them and Nikki Price from college now. It is available on the county YouTube page so if you haven't had a chance to watch I encourage you to do so.

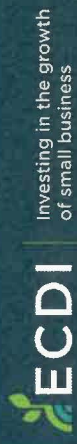
- v. - Lenora Lockett with The Department of Equity and Inclusion started by saying she will be going over a few items that the department is planning for the summer months and what they've done since the last equity Commission meeting in March. The department did the annual virtual kick off of the "What's Next Program" that was a virtual webinar focusing on the equity report that is posted by January 31st of every year. The equity report provides a summary of county departments and agencies' efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in their operations. In April they had the first county vendor fair for calendar year 2025 and various departments represented including many of those here on the panel today. There's an opportunity for vendors to get face-to-face assistance and answer any questions and to learn what the county plans to purchase over the next 24 months. Also, during the last week in April they had the first of two sessions of the all-staff DEI town hall training. The focus of that training is for any staff that has not completed the prior trainings, targeting our new employees. They'll be offering that every six months and will follow that up in October. This month in May, there was a joint multi agency certification program that the department participated in with several other sister agencies such as Regional Sewer District, City of Cleveland and RTA to name a few of the entities represented. It also had a procurement component to bring the tie between why do you want vendors to get certified at the various entities so that they can have access and increased awareness about opportunities at each of those agencies. For the future months coming up this summer they have the first event, which will be the mid-year equity summit. HR is presenting along with the

Personnel Review Commission(PRC) and also DEI. The focus of that seminar will be workforce, our greatest resource. It will be virtual, and the target audiences will include supervisors, managers and leaders at any level of supervision in Cuyahoga County. The invitations for that program will be sent sometime next week in June. For July, they'll have the second vendor fair, which they're doing three times this year. April was the first one, in July it will be July 17th and then the final one for this year will be October 23<sup>rd</sup>. It's opportunity for businesses to come and get face to face assistance and to learn what the county is planning to buy and the updated purchasing forecast that is scheduled for July 1<sup>st</sup>. We're also working with a multi department group planning the next meeting of the various county equity teams with details still being finalized. Also, in August they plan to have the second series of trainings for DEI management. It includes the first management training session and then a week later they'll follow up with a couple of sessions of the management session 2 similar to the town hall. This is mainly geared toward newly promoted or newly hired managers, leaders and supervisors or anyone that has not completed the training before. They'll round out the summer in September with the second "What's Next Session" and the topic for those trainings will be microaggressions do's and don'ts. That topic was selected from a survey completed early this year either January or February. Those are the tasks, programs and initiatives that DEI will be focusing on for the next few months. Lenora ended with Thank you again everyone, it's always inspiring to hear all the work that is occurring in departments to make sure that there's equitable access awareness and opportunities for our community.

- V. Jasmine Dixon and Nicole Liatos-Economic and Community Development Institute (ECDI)-Presentation (power point attached)
- VI. -Closing Remarks
  - i. -No closing remarks
  - ii. Adjourn (10:56 am)

*Live Stream available for viewing on our YouTube Channel*  
*Next Scheduled Meeting: August 21, 2025 @ 10:00am*





# CUYAHOGA COUNTY EQUITY COMMISSION MEETING

Advancing Opportunity Through  
Entrepreneurship in Cuyahoga County





## Mission & History

*Investing in people to create measurable and enduring social and economic change.*

**Founded in 2004, ECDI is a non-profit community economic development organization.**

- US Treasury Certified CDFI
- #1 SBA Microloan Intermediary in the US
- Serves the State of Ohio and parts of Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia
- More than \$201 million in lending
- One-stop-shop for small business development: *access to capital, training, and counseling, incubation*





## **Educate. Invest. Innovate.**

### **Client Services**

Wrap-around services, training and incubator/accelerator programs to increase business success

### **Lending**

Access to capital for all entrepreneurs who face barriers with traditional lenders







# Training, Education, Mentoring

Giving entrepreneurs the foundation they  
need to succeed



**ECDI**

Investing in the growth  
of small business



# Client Services

## **Women's Business Centers of Ohio**

Support for all genders from business planning to industry trainings and beyond

## **ECDI Contractor Resource Center**

Enabling sub-contractors to grow

## **Food Incubation Services**

Wrap-around support for growing your food-based business.

## **Veterans Business Outreach Center**

Helping veterans and service members to start and grow businesses



**Serving the Ohio region with locations in  
Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, and  
Portsmouth**

- Serve **all** entrepreneurs
- One-on-one counseling sessions
- Training focused on key business topics
- Digital marketing and web design workshops
- Loan package preparation
- Networking events
- Access to the Professional Advisory Network
- Legal advice, document preparation & review





# Small Business Lending

**Providing fair access to responsible,  
affordable loan capital**



**ECDI**

Investing in the growth  
of small business



# ECDI Lending and Technical Assistance

## Lending

- SBA Community Advantage and Microloan programs
- Loans ranging from \$750 to \$2 Million
- Terms up to 10 years
- Average Loan size: \$21,000
- Interest rates as low as 2%

## Technical Assistance

- 1:1 assistance from Relationship Manager
- Ongoing TA from Portfolio Team and professional consultants
- Counseling and in-depth training through various ECDI departments

# Small Business Lending

## Scored Loan

**A scored loan offers quick, accessible working capital funding with minimal documentation.**

- Up to \$50,000 for existing businesses
- Up to \$30,000 for start-ups
- Credit score requirements starting as low as 600
- Requires sufficient historical or projected profit
- Tiered loan amounts and terms based on credit and business performance



# Small Business Lending

## Loan Specials

**Limited-time loans, available a few times annually, for working capital needs.**

- Competitive 2% interest rate
- Up to \$5,000 for startups
- Up to \$10,000 for existing businesses
- Affordable monthly payments
- Applications processed on a first-come, first-served basis.



# Small Business Lending

## Mobilization Loan

### Commercial Construction contracts

- Funds for labor and materials to jump start a project
- Up to \$350,000
- Loan Terms: Up to 1 year, Up to 3 draws
- Interest Rate: 0%
- Closing Fee: 5%
- Use of Funds: Payroll, insurance cost, vendors, subcontractors, materials, supplies, and equipment.





# Coaching & Training Outcomes

ECDI Support for Cuyahoga County Businesses | Oct 2024 – May 2025

## Key Highlights:

- **291 Cuyahoga County clients engaged** through training, coaching, or events
- **34 participants completed** business plans & training
- **Training topics** delivered to Cuyahoga County businesses included:
  - Access to Capital
  - Building a Business Plan & Bootstrapping Your Brand
  - Market Analysis & Financial projections
- **Support services** provided to Cuyahoga County businesses included:
  - Business Start-Up & Pre-Planning
  - Credit Counseling
  - Business Financing
  - Marketing & Sales
  - Business Operations
  - Tax Planning
  - Cybersecurity
  - E-Commerce
  - Government Contracting
  - Business Accounting



Investing in the growth  
of small business

## ECDI in Cuyahoga County

- More than **\$23.7 Million disbursed** all time
- Over \$5.1 Million in Cuyahoga loan funding disbursed
- **\$500,000** in County grants disbursed
- More than **\$5.8 million** in PPP lending in 2021
- 3,670+ Jobs Created/Retained all time
- **21** loans and **\$523,215** disbursed Oct 2024 – Feb 2025





Investing in the growth  
of small business

# Thank You

[www.ECDI.org](http://www.ECDI.org)