

MEDIA RELEASE

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Governor Markell Opens Summit with State Leaders on Diversity in Government

(DOVER, Del.) – Governor Jack Markell opened a training event on Tuesday at Delaware State University which provided a venue for open discussion and learning about ways to better incorporate diversity into the State’s strategic workforce planning. Over 300 State leaders, including Cabinet secretaries, state agency heads, division directors and human resources professionals participated in the Equal Employment Opportunity Summit which was hosted by the Governor’s Council on Equal Employment Opportunity (GCEEO).

“There is real strength in diversity,” said Governor Markell. “Varied backgrounds give each the opportunity to bring something unique and valuable to the table to help. This Summit was primarily about promoting the understanding that to serve the people of Delaware the best we can, we must be a thoughtful, intentional and diverse state government.”

Both the morning and afternoon sessions were treated to a thought-provoking interactive presentation by Armers Moncure of Cook Ross, Inc. Mr. Moncure is a nationally-known expert on the topic of unconscious bias and a champion of “conscious change,” a strategy of awareness and skill building that leads to continuous improvement and enhanced performance. Through various individual and group activities, the attendees learned that unconscious bias is an issue when not addressed can effect hiring, promotion and other decisions managers make on a regular basis.

Remarks at the Summit were also given by Lt. Governor Matt Denn and Deputy Secretary of State James Collins, who was appointed GCEEO Chairman in 2009.

"The people of Delaware whom we serve are of diverse cultures and backgrounds. The most effective way for us to deliver services and shape policies is to reflect that diversity in government," said Mr. Collins. "This 'I am Aware' Summit is a great way to raise awareness and ensure we are culturally competent as we interact with a diverse workforce and make decisions on hiring and promotion."

The GCEEO was established in 2009 under Executive Order Eight by Governor Markell to bolster a continuing commitment to equal opportunity hiring standards and best practices of human resources management in executive branch agencies. One of the directives of the Executive Order was that each State agency must maintain an Affirmative Action Plan putting forth specific, actionable steps to eliminate any unlawful discrimination in employment and to assure equal employment opportunities.

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