

November 13, 2024

Members of the 119th Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Returning Member of Congress:

Welcome to the 119th Congress!

This is a time of great staff transition, and as you prepare to fill openings in your office, we ask you to prioritize racial diversity in your hiring, particularly among your personal office top staff (e.g., chief of staff, legislative director, and communications director) and “pathway” staff (e.g., deputy chiefs of staff, senior advisers, legislative assistants, counsels, and press secretaries/deputy communications directors).

If you will hold a committee or subcommittee leadership position, we also ask that you prioritize diversity in filling any openings for staff director, deputy staff director, chief clerk, deputy chief clerk, policy director, communications director, deputy communications director, general counsel, deputy general counsel, counsel, senior policy advisor, policy advisor, budget director, and professional staff member.

Hiring a team that reflects the diversity in your district would help you to more effectively serve your constituents. Having a more diverse team has been [shown](#) to increase creativity and innovation, which are important skills for congressional staffers.

In November 2021, the [U.S. House of Representatives released results from its study on diversity and compensation](#). This study found that people of color accounted for 30.7 percent of U.S. House staff, which lags behind the national population of people of color (40 percent). The gap is even wider when compared to the percentage of people of color in key roles such as chief of staff/deputy chief of staff, legislative director/deputy legislative director, and communications director/press secretary. The Joint Center’s October 2022 report, [Racial Diversity Among Top Staff in the U.S. House of Representatives](#), found that people of color make up 40 percent of the population, whereas they only make up 18 percent of top U.S. House staff

As of June 30, 2023, the Joint Center’s tracker of racial diversity of top staff hires in the 118th Congress showed that people of color accounted for 18.4 percent of top staff hired by returning U.S. House members. This was a slight improvement, but the hiring of diverse top staffers by returning House members continues to lag behind the national population.

You have an opportunity to start to change these statistics over the next few months as you hire top staff and pathway staff for your offices. The Joint Center is tracking and sharing the hiring patterns for all top staff in congressional offices [here](#).

We urge you to immediately take the following steps in preparation for building a staff to support you in the 119th Congress:

1. ***Adopt a Diversity Plan:*** Develop a written office diversity and inclusion plan that includes staff retention and development strategies, data collection, and analysis procedures. A [study](#) found that organizations that shared their diversity data with stakeholders allowed them to increase accountability and transparency around issues of diversity. Similarly, the U.S. Congress can share data about their staff diversity to increase accountability and transparency with the American people. Of course, Title VII prohibits basing employment decisions on race or other protected characteristics. Expanding recruitment to diversify the candidate pool and removing barriers to apply are examples of measures that employers can take to diversify staff that bring more candidates into consideration and are lawful.
2. ***Work with the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO):*** The [CAO](#) provides administrative, technical, and operational services to House members and staff. Launched in August 2021, the [U.S. House of Representatives Human Resources \(HR\) Hub](#) provides access to best practices, tips, tools, and customizable templates specifically designed for the needs of member offices. The House HR Hub provides over 30 hiring support resources focused on recruiting and selecting staff. These include sample messages to help communicate with applicants during the hiring process, several job posting examples, and templates for conducting writing tests. The House HR Hub also contains links to additional House resources, including payroll and benefits documents, resources related to counseling and employee well-being.
3. ***Work With the Tri-Caucus Staff Associations:*** In recruiting talent, work with the [Congressional Asian Pacific American Staff Association \(CAPASA\)](#), [Congressional Black Associates \(CBA\)](#), [Congressional Hispanic Staff Association \(CHSA\)](#), and [Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus \(SBLSC\)](#), which maintain databases of strong diverse talent.
4. ***Engage the Tri-Caucus Nonprofit Organizations:*** The [Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute \(CHCI\)](#), [Congressional Black Caucus Foundation \(CBCF\)](#), [Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies \(APAICS\)](#), and other organizations similarly focused on diversity in government are great resources for member offices. Recruiting and/or accepting interns and fellows from their programs, meeting with and speaking to their program participants, and supporting their missions by participating in their events will increase your office's visibility among diverse talent and continue to build the pipeline of diverse staff.

In the new Congress, top and key pathway staffers will have significant influence in decisions that affect our entire nation. This includes developing legislation and providing oversight of hundreds of administrative agencies that employ over three million civilian and military workers and overseeing a multi-trillion-dollar budget and appropriations process.

Ensuring racial diversity among your top and pathway staff would enhance the deliberation, innovation, legitimacy, and outcomes of your office and the House of Representatives.

You have an opportunity to show how the experiences and skills of all Americans are vital to your work. We look forward to working with you.

Regards,

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies & partners (will be listed alphabetically)

American Governance Institute
Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS)
Black Economic Alliance
Black Futures Lab
Black to the Future Action Fund
Black Voters Matter Fund
Black Women's Congressional Alliance
Black Women's Health Imperative
CenterLink: The Community of LGBTQ Centers
Coalition on Human Needs
Color Of Change
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)
D&P Creative Strategies
Democracy Fund Voice
Diversity in Government Relations Coalition
EdTrust
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities
Equal Justice Society
Equality California
Impact Fund
Inclusive America
Issue One
Japanese American Citizens League
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
MANA, A National Latina Organization
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)
National Action Network
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
National Asian Pacific American Families Allied for Substance Awareness and Harm Reduction
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB)
National Association of Securities Professionals
National Bankers Association
National Black Justice Collective
National Black Worker Center
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)
National Employment Law Project

National Partnership for Women & Families
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
NCAPA (National Council of Asian Pacific Americans)
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
POPVOX Foundation
Race Forward
Reflections DEI
Representative Democracy
Rulon & White Governance Strategies
Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus (SBLSC)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Springfield Food Policy Council
State and Federal Communications, Inc.
State Innovation Exchange (SiX)
TESOL International Association
The Almond Group
The Arc of the United States
The Madison Group, LLC
The National Institute For Lobbying & Ethics
The Sikh Coalition
Third Way
U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.
UnidosUS
Union for Reform Judaism
Washington Government Relations Group
Women of Reform Judaism
Working IDEAL