



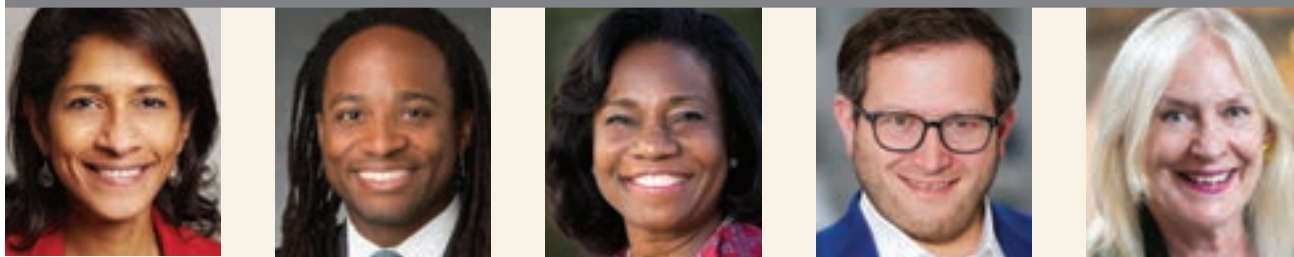
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How the historic facility could serve Lady Liberty  
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# CRAIN'S

## NEW YORK BUSINESS

CRAINSNYORK.COM | JUNE 21, 2021



# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

**Good intentions don't always translate into results when it comes to workplace diversity. Plus, profiles of 37 finalists in Crain's first diversity awards program **PAGE 15****



**ECONOMY**

## Restaurants and hotels lead city's job gains as life gets back to normal

Firms added 41,300 jobs in May, and outlook remains rosy with pandemic restrictions sunsetting

BY CARA EISENPRESS

New York City's forecast continues to improve for a back-to-normal summer. Employers led by restaurants and hotels added 41,300 jobs last month, as the city pared down

Covid-19-related capacity restrictions amid plummeting cases of the virus.

Those numbers could be headed higher as most remaining pandemic restrictions are now history as well after the state cleared a milestone set by Gov. Andrew Cuomo:

70% of New York adults have received at least one vaccine shot.

"What does 70% mean? It means we can return to life as we know it," Cuomo bragged. Not to be outdone, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced a ticker-tape parade for July 7 to honor frontline workers in a celebra-

tory but somber event. In all, the city has lost 33,358 residents and recorded a staggering 953,000 total cases since early last year, when the pandemic left the city eerily silent.

Full economic recovery will take

See **JOBS** on page 30

**GOTHAM GIGS**  
**KEEPING**  
**BIGFOOT IN**  
**THE NEWS**  
**PAGE 31**



**SMALL BUSINESS**  
**PPP's second**  
**round gives**  
**firms breathing**  
**room**  
**PAGE 14**



# Making a lasting impact in New York City

At Bank of America, we have long been committed to advancing racial equality and economic opportunity in the communities where we work and live. Recognizing the urgency of the moment, we've expanded our longstanding efforts to drive progress by committing an additional \$1.25 billion over five years to create opportunity for people and communities of color.

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José Tavarez  
President, Bank of America New York City

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**BANK OF AMERICA**

# National program helps provide low-cost internet for New Yorkers, but enrollment lags

BY RYAN DEFFENBAUGH

The state and federal governments are racing to get more low-income households connected to low-cost broadband internet, recognizing that the service has been critical for learning and working during the pandemic.

But those efforts so far have had limited success. The state's effort has been put on hold amid a legal challenge, and only 5% of eligible New York households have enrolled in the federal effort, which offers \$50 toward the monthly bill for qualifying families, including those eligible for SNAP and reduced-price school lunches.

One possible reason for the slow uptake: those who could benefit the most are hardest to reach, because they do not have a reliable internet connection.

Valerie White, executive director of the community development group LISC NYC, described this as a chicken-and-egg problem—one that can be fixed only through old-fashioned outreach.

"To get to the population most in need, there has to be a very targeted, on-the-ground marketing campaign," White said.

There were 127,000 households enrolled in New York as of June 14, according to federal data. The Fed-

eral Communications Commission, which oversees the program, did not provide an estimate for how many New York households qualify.

"This [is] a public health crisis that showed the vital need for broadband," said Richard Berkley, executive director of New York's Utility Project, an Albany-based initiative. "People should be running to get signed up. So it is either that they don't know or something is making it too difficult."

The FCC is working with more than 13,000 partners across the country to get the word out, said Anne Viegles, spokeswoman for the agency. Rep. Yvette Clarke, who represents parts of Brooklyn, recently held a webinar with acting FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel to explain how to sign up.

## No connection

An estimated 30% of households in New York City lack a home broadband subscription, according to estimates from Mayor Bill de Blasio's office. Basic internet access plans cost \$40 per month, on average, in the city.

Getting the word out about the federal effort has become especially important, Berkley noted, because a state law aimed at expanding broadband access is on hold.

The law would have required internet service providers to offer \$15



BUCK ENNIS

monthly broadband to low-income New Yorkers. Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office previously estimated that 2.7 million households statewide would qualify for this discount.

But a lawsuit filed last month by telecom industry interests said the state did not have the right to regulate broadband rates—an argument that Judge Denis Hurley of U.S. District Court found compelling enough to pause the implementation of the law until further court hearings are held.

Hurley noted that the federal government is already offering to subsidize internet costs for low-income households, potentially serving the same population the state is targeting.

The state countered that the federal program does not go far

enough, especially because it expires once the \$3 billion appropriated by Congress for it runs out.

"The Legislature rationally determined that these benefits—at least one of which is temporary and voluntary—are insufficient to ensure that low-income New Yorkers have affordable access to broadband internet service," Attorney General Letitia James wrote in the state's response to the lawsuit. "And the necessity of access to affordable broadband service will not disappear as the state emerges from the pandemic."

## Getting the word out

Earlier this month federal officials celebrated when the broadband program reached 2.3 million households enrolled in "three short

weeks," as described by Rosenworcel. But sign-ups have slowed after about 1.1 million households across the U.S. enrolled during the first full week of the benefit, starting May 17. The total dropped to 476,000 the week after. There were 240,000 new households enrolled between June 7 and June 13.

Internet service providers—who are partnered with the federal government in promoting the program—say they are working to reach customers in need.

Verizon has a sign-up webpage detailing the program. Spokesman Richard Young said the company is using direct outreach and social media marketing as well as working with nonprofits to promote the program.

Altice, which operates Optimum internet, announced in May that it would promote the benefit through digital advertising, direct email and newsletters. The company did not respond to a request for comment about whether it is marketing the program in any other way.

Rich Ruggiero, a spokesman for Spectrum parent company Charter, said the company has used direct mail, email and telemarketing, among other measures, to inform customers about the program in the 41 states it operates. The company also added a banner promoting the program on its website. ■

## POLITICS

# Mom-and-pop shops will get breaks from fines under City Council bills

BY BRIAN PASCUS

The City Council passed a pair of bills last week that will grant New York small businesses relief from the city's fines and regulations and change how penalties are levied.

The two bills—one sponsoring an amnesty program for penalties assessed on small businesses and another that issues warnings instead of fines—were passed by a near-unanimous consent roll-call vote Thursday.

"This amnesty program will give businesses a fighting chance to survive and maintain jobs, and help rebuild the local economy," said Councilman Mark Gjonaj, chairman of the small-business committee.

The amnesty bill offers 25% reductions on fines and interest payments for penalties assessed prior to March 7, 2020, and 75% reductions on fines and interest assessed during the Covid-19 pandemic. The temporary amnesty program

will be run by the Department of Finance and last for 90 days into next year, according to Gjonaj's office, and the pre-pandemic fine reductions extend back eight years.

Councilwoman Vanessa Gibson crafted the second bill with Gjonaj. It revamps the city's penalty structure by setting new limits, lowering existing ones and allowing small-business owners time to right their first-time mistakes before being hit with a fine.

"Not every infraction must come with a business-killing fine," Gjonaj said. "We should seek to give businesses a chance to make corrections whenever possible."

## Battered by violations

The two bills, which await Mayor Bill de Blasio's signature, come at a time when many small businesses have been battered by violations and penalties, especially after being forced to close as part of pandemic precaution measures.

The Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings issued \$362 mil-

lion in fines against people, businesses and property last year and received \$58.8 million in payments as of March 2021, according to Deputy Commissioner Marisa Senigo. The numbers are down from 2019, when \$484 million in penalties were imposed and \$165.9 million paid.

"We feel that small businesses have been used as an ATM machine by the city," said Robert Bookman, general counsel to the NYC Hospitality Alliance. "Small businesses feel it's simply an extra tax to be in business, because there's such a myriad of rules and regulations that it's almost impossible to be in compliance with all of them."

Between the amnesty offered by Gjonaj's bill and the overhaul in Gibson's bill of what have traditionally been considered violations and converting them into warnings with opportunities to cure, Bookman said he believes the new laws can be game changers.

"Finally, there is a piece of legislation that's starting to address this,"

he said. "It's a huge step forward."

Speaker Corey Johnson, who is running for city comptroller, had backed a bill offering refunds to businesses that had paid fines, but after resistance from the de Blasio administration, he threw his weight behind the amnesty bill.

## Key to recovery

"This legislative package is the biggest overhaul of penalties in the council's history," said Johnson, whose office confirmed only one hearing was held on the legislation, on March 1. "The common-sense measures will be key to our city's recovery."

De Blasio's office indicated its support for both measures, and the mayor is expected to sign them soon.

"New York City wouldn't be New York City without our mom-and-pop shops," said Laura Feyer, deputy press secretary. "The mayor is committed to helping small businesses recover post-Covid, including reducing these fines." ■

## WEBCAST CALLOUT



## THIS THURSDAY!

Join Crain's to celebrate this year's list of notable LGBTQ+ leaders and executives. The event will open with a keynote address from Maeve DuVally, a communications executive at Goldman Sachs, who will walk us through her inspiring gender transition journey and address the challenges and reactions of her coworkers and associates. In the workplace, the LGBTQ+ community often faces inequality, harassment and an inability to advance. They can fear expressing their true selves, resulting in poor job satisfaction and quality of life.

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OLEG ALBINSKY

# FUTURE OF HISTORIC PIER A IS UP FOR GRABS

**Newly renovated space could go from a dockside watering hole to a federal screening area**

BY CARA EISENPRESS

**A** longtime champion of downtown Manhattan wants to turn Pier A restaurant and some associated businesses into a security and welcoming center for the 4.5 million annual visitors to the Statue of Liberty.

Since 2001 visitors have gone through screening in tall white tents that block the view at the southern end of the park.

“This monstrosity of vinyl has got to go,” said Warrie Price, president and founder of the Battery Conservancy, which maintains the 25 acres of public parkland at Manhattan’s southern tip. “This cannot be the way to welcome our visitors.”

The city, the state, the federal government, the current leaseholders and the leaseholders’ lenders would have to come to an agreement to change how Pier A is used, reprising

scenes that first took place in the early 2000s. If the various interests find common ground now, their collaboration could foretell a more unified view of land use in a post-pandemic New York City.

**“PRIVATIZING PUBLIC SPACES IS NOT SOMETHING WE LIKE”**

“We can’t just come back the way we left it,” as Price put it. “We have to be so much better.”

Pier A is the city’s last remaining historic pier, constructed in the 1880s by the city’s Department of Docks. The Police De-

partment’s harbor patrol has also used the pier, as has the Fire Department’s marine division. In 1992 it was left vacant.

## Port of call

If Pier A is to become a security station, the first obstacle would be the current tenant, a group called Pier A Battery Park Associates that includes Peter Poulakakos, of Harry’s NYC, and several venues: Pier A Harbor House, a bar called Blacktail, an oyster bar and an event space. The second would be the community board, which has worked to keep Pier A accessible to locals and would be loathe to give up the outdoor seating area.

“Privatizing public spaces is not something we like,” said Tammy Meltzer, chairperson of Community Board 1.

Though after-work crowds and tourists seem to

See **PIER A** on page 30

# CBRE goes after FreshDirect for \$400K broker fee after Bronx warehouse fails to sell

BY CARA EISENPRESS

CBRE has asked a judge to hold FreshDirect to a \$400,000 breakup fee the broker says it is owed after a 2019 listing agreement did not result in a sale of the grocery delivery company's warehouse.

The payment was due in October, according to a lawsuit filed last Monday in state Supreme Court in

Manhattan. FreshDirect said the offers CBRE brought in did not meet an agreed-upon \$200 million floor, so the breakup fee does not apply.

Since then FreshDirect was sold to Dutch grocery company Ahold Delhaize for about \$332 million. The sale valued FreshDirect's property, plant and equipment about \$388 million, but liabilities drove the overall price lower.

In 2019, a year after the firm

moved into a Bronx warehouse that took more than five years and millions of dollars to build, its leadership apparently hoped to sell the space and lease it.

CBRE became its exclusive agent, agreeing to pay the breakup fee if Aug. 21 arrived and no sale had closed. Two offers came in: one from private investment management firm Centerbridge Partners of Manhattan, and the other from real

estate lender Thor Urban Investments, according to an affidavit from Brian Scott, a senior managing director in the sale/leaseback group at CBRE.

But FreshDirect said CBRE's pitch overstated the value of the facility because of FreshDirect's outstanding loans, according to a letter filed by FreshDirect's general counsel, Teepoo Riaz. The Thor offer, for example, was originally for \$205 mil-

lion, with an asset management fee equal to \$6.2 million. Later Thor reduced its offer to \$170 million.

FreshDirect received an \$18.9 million subsidy from the state's Excelsior Jobs Program in 2012, when it said it would buy land and build its facility in the Bronx. It previously was located in Long Island City.

Neither CBRE nor FreshDirect would comment last Tuesday on the active litigation. ■

## Prologis continues buying spree with \$42.7M purchase

BY EDDIE SMALL

Industrial giant Prologis has added to its New York holdings, buying a site in Queens for \$42.7 million.

Prologis purchased 46-81 Metropolitan Ave. in Maspeth from a Queens Village limited-liability company, which had purchased the site for \$23 million in 2016, property records show. The industrial property spans about 196,000 square feet and consists of four single-story buildings, according to city records.

Representatives for Prologis did not respond to a request for comment. The company's plans for the site are unclear.

This is the latest in a string of Queens purchases Prologis has made in recent years. The company bought 18-51 Flushing Ave. from Frito-Lay for \$37.6 million in January 2020, and it purchased 48-00 Grand Ave. for \$51 million in November. It said it plans to use the latter site as logistics space.

New York's industrial real estate industry has been one of the few sectors that has not declined significantly in activity during the Covid-19 pandemic—to the point where the main issue in the city is not a lack of demand but a lack of supply. Firms leased about 870,000 square feet of space in the sector during the first quarter of the year, according to a CBRE report, and a lack of available space was the main factor preventing that number from being even higher.

There were 22 investment sales worth more than \$232 million in the city's industrial sector during the first quarter, and the average asking price dropped by 11% year over year, thanks to properties being sold or taken off the market, according to the report. ■



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## RESIDENTIAL SPOTLIGHT

# Harlem brownstone hits market at \$8.2M

Restoring the multi-tenant building to its former glory took more than two decades

BY C.J. HUGHES

For Dimitrios Katsarelis, a Greek citizen and classical historian, stumbling upon an important ruin is something special. So in the 1990s, when he chanced upon some past-their-prime brownstones near Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem while running an errand, it was a moment to savor.

"I went crazy," said Katsarelis, now 59.

Soon, one of those buildings would become his home: an 1888 Romanesque revival-style landmark with a gabled roof and arched windows that cost \$395,000 in 1998. The deal was challenging, though, he said, as many lenders did not want to take a chance with what was considered a rough-edged neighborhood.

### Multimillion-dollar makeover

Restoring the multi-tenant structure to its stately former self would take more than two decades and feature many characters including bricklayers and experts on slate and stained glass.

"Every penny we made went into that house," said Katsarelis, who embarked on the multimillion-dollar makeover with his partner, Vasilios Kontakos, a former owner of coffee shops on the Upper East



Side.

The couple could be sticklers for detail. Mortar for the outside walls had to be recessed slightly to allow the sun to better reflect off wine-red bricks. Similar concerns about the play of light kept the owners from

installing protective layers atop Victorian stained-glass windows; besides, the layers wouldn't have been around in the old days. A brochure that was used to market the property in the 19th century helped with particulars.

Today the 5-story house, which is listed at \$8.2 million with Sotheby's International Realty, offers 10 bedrooms; seven full bathrooms and two half baths; and nine working fireplaces. Original details—many which had been hidden by tiles and

**BUILT IN 1888, THE LANDMARK WITH A GABLED ROOF AND ARCHED WINDOWS COST \$395,000 IN 1998**

plaster after 20th-century renovations—include inlaid floors, beam ceilings and wainscoting.

There are modern touches, too, including the garden-level kitchen with stainless-steel appliances. There is also a second kitchen, on the fifth floor, in a space sometimes leased in recent years as a short-term rental. (The house is a legal two-family residence.) Paving stones and bricks line a fenced-in yard.

### Appreciation for history

Plans for the future are up in the air for Katsarelis and Kontakos, who have spent much of the Covid-19 pandemic on Skyros, a Greek island. They said they have their fingers crossed that the house's next owners don't alter its time-capsule vibe.

"I'm hoping," Katsarelis said, "they have an appreciation for history." ■

## REAL ESTATE

# Royalton Park Avenue falls behind on \$124M loan

BY NATALIE SACHMECHI

The owners of the Royalton Park Avenue, a 249-room hotel on Park Avenue South, are falling further behind on their \$124 million property loan even as other hotels in the city are celebrating reopening.

The debt, which is part of a package of commercial mortgage-backed securities, is close to de-

ropped to 54%, according to Trepp, and its owners fell delinquent on loan payments several times. The special servicer gave them some relief by allowing them to use cash reserves to make payments, but the situation hasn't improved.

The hotel's troubles didn't start there. It had been struggling with negative cash flows since at least 2015. It was having trouble even during the good times, in 2019, when its occupancy rates were near 90%.

That's a sign that the hotel's financial problems go deeper than a dearth of guests. Representatives for Highgate and GreenOak did not return requests for comment.

### Back to business

Meanwhile, other well-capitalized hotels in the city have begun to emerge from their pandemic hibernation, including The Peninsula, the Mandarin Oriental and the Dream Downtown and Dream Midtown hotels, which are operated by the Dream Hotel Group.

The Dream Downtown property was owned by an Indian firm, Saha-

ra India Pariwar, which fell behind on loan payments to its lender, Katara Hospitality. Katara reportedly took over the ground lease for the building for \$125 million this month, though that is not likely to affect Dream's operations at the site.

Katara also purchased the Plaza Hotel from Sahara for \$600 million in 2018.

More hotels have changed hands during the past 15 months, including the LaGuardia Marriott, the Watson Hotel and a Long Island City property that used to be home to the Z NYC Hotel. In September the Royalton Midtown sold for \$41 million—the second time the property sold at a loss in a decade.

Others remain bullish on the city's tourism industry. Hotel operator Marriott and developer Lightstone have expanded their portfolio of hotels in the city with the Moxy Lower East Side and the Moxy



Williamsburg.

The long-awaited Margaritaville Resort Times Square is slated to open July 1.

### Conversion plan

The city is eager to buy many of the hundreds of hotels that remain closed or are in distress—to turn them into affordable housing.

A bill sponsored by state Sen. Michael Gianaris of Queens that was sent recently to Gov. Andrew

Cuomo's desk outlines a plan for making the conversions happen.

It requires that at least half of the converted properties be set aside for homeless people; the rest would go to tenants who make 50% to 80% of their area's median income.

The properties would be managed by nonprofit organizations and would be protected by rent-stabilization laws. Rents would be capped at 30% of an area's median income. ■

# Pity party: Sequential Brands says its execs are only victims of fraud they allegedly cooked up

A struggling fashion house charged with accounting fraud says the victims are its own executives, many of whom were involved in the alleged illegal activity.

The unusual defense came from Sequential Brands in a recent motion to dismiss a civil case filed by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Sequential, whose stock price has fallen by 75% in recent months, used to own the Martha Stewart label and might sell the Jessica Simpson fashion line back to the singer.

## Writedown delayed

The government contends that after buying Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia in 2015, Sequential executives understood falling sales would force them to take a writedown of at least \$100 million. But they “unreasonably” failed to take action, the SEC said, resulting in “materially false and misleading” financial statements.

Sequential, which denied misleading investors, contends nobody was hurt except its own executives.

“The alleged fraud ‘victims’ are all company insiders, nearly all of whom were involved in the [accounting] decision,” the company said, calling the government’s case “nothing more than a fraud by company insiders against themselves.”

Douglas Carmichael, former chief auditor of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, said Sequential’s position is unusual.

“The point that the executives are the victims seems similar to arguments I have seen in which the CEO or CFO argues they were significant stockholders and never sold any stock so could not have had a bad intent,” said Carmichael, an accounting professor at Baruch College’s Zicklin School of Business.

## Out of fashion

Sequential was a fast-growing outfit until some of its brands turned unfashionable in 2016. Under accounting rules, when assets such as fashion labels fail to generate expected cash flows, they must be written down. But doing that surely would have crushed the price of Sequential’s stock, which it used to pay for acquisitions. The company sat on the bad news until early 2018.

The stock indeed slumped when the company came forward, but Sequential insisted nobody was harmed except executives, board members and consultants granted shares as part of their compensation.

Because those people didn’t pay for their shares, no sale took place—and the fraud statutes concerning share sales don’t apply—Sequential argued through its at-



AARON ELSTEIN

torneys at Ibsen Dunn & Crutcher.

Jill Fisch, a professor of business law at the University of Pennsylvania, said employee stock grants are regulated differently from shares sold to outsiders.

“I don’t know if that ar-

gument wins in court, though,” Fisch said.

“I’ve never seen this direct type of response,” said John Lieberman, a managing director at a large accounting firm. “However, in this case it’s reasonable from an accounting point of view that they’d raise it.”

The matter will ultimately go be-

fore Judge J. Paul Oetken of U.S. District Court unless the parties settle.

Sequential’s attorney, Mary Beth Maloney, said: “Following a three-year investigation, the SEC did not even allege a sale of securities to any outside investors. Sequential’s independent auditor has also never questioned the company’s report-

ing, despite the SEC’s allegations. Sequential is entitled to dismissal of this case now but, if trial is necessary, the company will be vindicated.”

The company is nearing a deal to sell the Jessica Simpson fashion line, according to Bloomberg News, and might do so as part of a bankruptcy filing. ■

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# VIEWPOINTS

## EDITORIAL

# Time is of the essence on bill to convert hotels, offices into affordable homes

The economic chaos unleashed by the Covid-19 pandemic has given rise to an unprecedented opportunity to quickly create affordable housing for homeless New Yorkers. Now it's up to Gov. Andrew Cuomo to stop equivocating and sign a bill aimed at converting distressed hotels and offices into homes for those in need.

The Housing Our Neighbors With Dignity Act would allow the state to finance the purchase and conversion of distressed hotels

tial conversions.

It also would provide the regulatory relief necessary to allow these conversions to be done quickly and cost-effectively.

At least half the units will be set aside for New Yorkers who were homeless immediately before applying for the converted units. And the other half will have an income cap of 80% of an area's median for tenants—provided that the average income of all tenants in the project does not exceed 50% of an area's median income.

Although Cuomo has yet to commit to signing the bill, he recognizes a need for more affordable housing in the city. As part of the initial state budget, he proposed a plan to

facilitate hotel and office conversions. That plan, however, was criticized for being too advantageous for for-profit developers.

The governor must act quickly on the new proposal.

Although occupancy rates in the five boroughs likely won't



## SOON IT WILL BECOME MORE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN DISTRESSED HOTELS

and vacant commercial office space into affordable housing by nonprofit organizations.

The measure, which was passed two weeks ago by the state Senate and Assembly, would allow for \$100 million in new capital to be spent on commercial-to-residen-

recover to prepandemic levels until 2025, workers and tourists are slowly coming back. About 40 of the 226 hotels in the city that were closed as of the end of March have announced plans to reopen by early summer.

Soon it will become more difficult to obtain distressed hotels suitable for conversion.

Homelessness in New York City

now stands at its highest level since the Great Depression of the 1930s. In April there were 53,199 homeless people, including 16,390 homeless children, sleeping each night in the New York City municipal shelter system, according to the Coalition for the Homeless, an advocacy and service organization.

Here's our chance to do better. ■

## OP-ED

# Digital-twin technology could guide the city's comeback

BY DAVE LASHELL

I'm not quite old enough to remember the Panorama of the City of New York from the 1964 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows, but I have walked around it at the Queens Museum. The "world's largest scale model" captured the city at 1:1,200 scale and included a dawn-to-dusk lighting cycle and mini moving airplanes. It modeled each of the city's 895,000

## THE PANDEMIC SET IN MOTION A RIFT AND A RECKONING

buildings as well as every street, park and bridge.

Today we have the potential for an even more impressive model because we've made the leap to digital.

Digital-twin technology allows users to zoom to any scale and see what's happening now, and it includes data about people, with

tools to consider diverse needs. Worldwide, cities are turning to digital twins to address their changing conditions.

### Double vision

In London, traffic sensing and a detailed city model led planners to change streets, making room for bicycles. In Prague, an awareness of extreme heat at the microclimate level led to new parks in places where they would best cool the city. In Milwaukee, knowledge about where underserved people lived ensured vaccines were administered to the most vulnerable first.

Just as the Panorama of 1964 foreshadowed, a digital twin provides a visual means to understand the full context of the city, seeing across space and time. It can be used to monitor vulnerability and risks to ensure equitable delivery of services; analyze mobility and aging infrastructure to prioritize investments; examine climate vul-

nerabilities to act where help is needed most; and safeguard staff while they deliver critical services.

Like all cities, New York has pockets of digital-twin activities. What is needed is a concerted effort to advance the concept and change the way information is collected, managed and shared. The problems threatening communities are increasingly complex, including climate change, racial equity, social justice, safe and reliable transportation, and equitable access to resources to improve upward mobility. City leaders and staff require an attitude that it's not your problem or my problem—it's our problem. A shared awareness and shared data are the best ways to solve our problems.

### Twofer

Digital-twin technology lets leaders look at current conditions and simulate scenarios: If we change X, we can expect a certain outcome. With each department serving its data in real time to everyone who needs it, the truth gets shared, and the data is available to

ask the hard questions.

The pandemic set in motion a rift and a reckoning. It exposed weaknesses, but it also led to data-driven government.

With a focus on digital twins, we'll all know more about our gray infrastructure (the buildings, networks, roads, railways and more that need maintaining), our green infrastructure (nature and natural processes that must be safeguarded) and our social infrastructure (people, communities and institutions).

We need to change to achieve new levels of efficiency, act with empathy and ensure the safety of staff and the public while improving equitable service delivery. Digital twins can deliver what all levels of city decision-makers need: the right information at the right time.

Now is the time to act. We have bounced back better before—and we will do it again! ■

*Dave LaShell is a strategic consultant who runs the local office of Esri, a science and technology company.*

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# New York Blood Center expansion could set dangerous precedent

**To the editor,**

The Coalition to Stop the Blood Center Commercial Tower, a newly formed umbrella organization, offers a widely held community perspective on the New York Blood Center/Longfellow application to rezone part of a residential street for an out-of-scale commercial tower.

The blood center and Longfellow, a for-profit life sciences developer, have applied for a rezoning of a 75-foot height limit on the Upper East Side—never violated since enacted in 1985—to one that permits a 334-foot tower (equivalent to 34 stories) with a bulk that approximates the Empire State Building, buildings in Hudson Yards and other Midtown commercial high-rises.

The contextual zoning, known as R8B, that the blood center/Longfellow seeks to change was created specifically to protect the light, air and relative calm on mid-block streets in a neighborhood where very tall buildings sit

**“WE HOPE THE BLOOD CENTER WILL BUILD ON A SITE THAT IS MORE APPROPRIATE”**

on the avenues. Zoning, by definition, is what prevents chaos, designating specified areas in which buildings have compatible uses and appropriate scale, height and bulk.

What the blood center/Longfellow seek to do is upend long-established zoning regulations solely for their own profit. If they are successful in their goal of receiving all the zoning changes and special permits that they seek, the site would, for all intents and purposes, have no zoning—a dangerous precedent.

What the proposal amounts to is spot zoning—zoning of one parcel of land that transforms the lot in a manner that is inconsistent with the neighborhood and is only to the applicant’s benefit.

If the blood center built a new, modern facility as of right under the current R8B zoning, it would have even more space than if the proposed tower is built. And the community would welcome that building.

Longfellow would own two-thirds of the tower. Would it rent out the space to life science tenants or, if there are no such tenants, sell the site for high-priced housing that would not have been permitted prior to the zoning change? How quickly would that open the door to other tall towers on the middle blocks, where once there were middle-income residences in small buildings.



DINAPOLI

NEW YORK STATE COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE

Clearly, the proposed tower belongs in a location where it could be built as of right; where it would not cast shadows on the only park in a half-mile radius in the most densely populated neighborhood in the city; or where it would not place a school complex with six schools—including one for children with cognitive disabilities such as autism—permanently in the shade.

The proposed building also belongs in an area in which a high-risk biohazard laboratory would not pose a threat to residents, schoolchildren and small businesses in a dense neighborhood.

To be clear, the New York Blood Center/Longfellow was invited by the de Blasio administration to build on city-owned land in East Harlem, Kips Bay or Long Island City, where it would not negatively impact the residences, schools, parks, and other essentials of neighborhood living. We hope the blood center/Longfellow will reconsider and build the tower on a site that would be more appropriate.

**ALIDA CAMP**  
Former chair, Community Board 8, Manhattan

**Diverse investment managers**  
In the online op-ed “Albany should force diverse asset management for its pension funds” that ran June 10, the authors were incorrect about the state pension fund’s MWBE commitments.

First, the New York State Common Retirement Fund, which I oversee, is recognized as one of the strongest and best-funded in the nation. It is a leader among state pension funds in allocating assets to diverse managers.

Roughly half of the fund’s estimated \$254 billion in assets are in public equities and fixed income, which are managed internally by dedicated, professional and diverse staff.

For the \$127 billion in assets that are managed externally, 21.5% have been allocated to minority- or woman-owned business enterprises.

That represents an increase of approximately 36% from the last fiscal year. With 21.5% of its actively managed external assets overseen by MWBE managers, the state’s pension fund exceeds the 20% target that some state pensions are just now targeting.

My Emerging Manager program, a dedicated subset of the fund’s overall MWBE commitments that seeks out commitments to smaller managers, also grew, from \$6.7 billion to \$9 billion. The program nurtures smaller MWBE firms to graduate to larger allocations. Our program is a leader among public pension funds.

The state pension fund will continue its sustained outreach to the MWBE and Emerging Manager investment community, which includes hosting a conference for the past 15 years that brings in diverse investment managers from across the country.

Although the authors have good intentions, New York state’s pension fund is already leading the way.

For more information or confirmation of the data, please see the fund’s annual report.

**THOMAS DINAPOLI**  
New York state comptroller

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## ACCOUNTING

### BDO USA, LLP

#### Anastasia Mironova

has joined the Real Estate and Construction practice at BDO USA, LLP as an Assurance Partner. She has spent the past 15 years serving a wide range of public and private companies, focusing primarily on REITs, mortgage finance companies and proptechs. At BDO, Anastasia will continue providing first-class service to companies, advising on complex accounting transactions, various regulatory reporting and Sarbanes-Oxley 404 requirements, and public offerings of debt and equity.



## FINANCIAL SERVICES

### SVB Leerink

SVB Leerink, a leading investment bank specializing in healthcare and life sciences, announced that **Anurag Jindal, M.D.** has joined the firm's Biopharma team as a Senior Managing Director. Dr. Jindal's hire reinforces SVB Leerink's leadership in the biopharma and life sciences sector as the firm also expands its expertise in healthcare services and technology. Dr. Jindal will be based in New York and will report to Dr. Dan Dubin, Global Co-Head of Healthcare Investment Banking.



## ACCOUNTING

### Crowe LLP

#### Chris Goodman

has been named chief marketing officer at Crowe LLP, an accounting, consulting and technology firm in the U.S. with offices around the world. In this role, Goodman is responsible for leading the firm's marketing and communications organization.



## NONPROFIT

### United Way of New York City

United Way of New York City recently announced the promotion of **Meaghan Brown** as EVP & Chief Advancement Officer. As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, reporting to UWNYC President & CEO Sheena Wright, Brown will play a key leadership role in UWNYC's programming and marketing functions.



## EDUCATION

### New York Institute of Technology

**Peter J. Romano** has been named chair of New York Institute of Technology's Board of Trustees, succeeding **Kevin D. Silva**, executive vice president at Voya Financial, who becomes Trustee Emeritus. Romano is president and founder of Peter J. Romano & Co., a project development and management consulting firm in Bellport, N.Y. A graduate of New York Tech's School of Architecture and Design, he has served on the board since 2011. "We are grateful for the leadership Kevin has provided. Peter's commitment to New York Tech and passion for educating the next generation of doers, makers, and innovators will be critical as we continue to reinvent the future of our university," said New York Tech President Henry C. "Hank" Foley. More info: [nyit.edu](http://nyit.edu)



Romano



Silva

## REAL ESTATE

### essensys

essensys, the leading global provider of software and technology to the flexible workspace industry, appointed **Brian Brown** as VP of their West Coast business development team. Brian will help landlords leverage software and technology to enable next generation flexible real estate solutions. He brings vast experience in asset management and flexible office solutions, most recently leading Irvine Co.'s Flex Workspace+ offering across its 50 million-SF national office portfolio.



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# ASKED & ANSWERED

## **GLENNDA TESTONE** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center

INTERVIEW BY MAYA KAUFMAN

**G**lennda Testone has spent more than a decade as executive director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center, but the pandemic posed a challenge unlike any she'd ever experienced. The West Village nonprofit raced to digitize its programming, knowing the community it serves was likely to be among the most vulnerable. It experienced surging demand for counseling and substance-use treatment and recovery services. Coming out of the crisis, Testone says, steps must be taken toward addressing the disparities in the LGBTQ community's access to health care.

### **What has it been like running a social services organization during the pandemic?**

It is sort of like rowing a boat as fast as you can while you're bailing it out and trying to build another boat just in case you need it. We started building our budget for the next fiscal year. We were predicting a \$4.5 million decrease. We were looking at a lot of things we felt we had to do to keep the organization going, in terms of salary reductions for the highest-paid folks for a period of time, some furloughs—things that were painful.

### **How do you raise funds in a pandemic?**

We were set to have one of our top two fundraisers, our

## DOSSIER

**WHO SHE IS** Executive director, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center

**AGE** 45

**BORN** Syracuse

**RESIDES** Asbury Park, N.J.

**EDUCATION** Bachelor's in philosophy and broadcast journalism, Syracuse University; master's in women's studies, the Ohio State University

**FAMILY LIFE** Testone and her partner have a toddler and a puppy named Gus that is part Siberian husky.

**ART BOOST** An online Sotheby's auction of works from the personal collection of artist Keith Haring brought in about \$3.7 million for the LGBT center in the fall.

**ON THE MOVE** Because the center could not hold its annual AIDS bike ride in September, it pivoted to a "275 challenge." Named for the 275-mile ride between New York and Boston, the event asked participants to bake 275 cookies or bike 275 miles on their own, among other activities. It raised almost \$1 million.

gala dinner, in April 2020 and obviously could not do that. Our other biggest fundraiser is our AIDS bike ride. Luckily in the beginning of the pandemic, there were a lot of foundations giving money, so we applied for as many grants as we could. All of the lifelines that were being thrown out we tried to grab.



### **Which services have been most in demand?**

Our mental health counseling services have been in highest demand since March 2020. We continue to see really significant need for our substance-use recovery services. We're offering more services in Spanish and opening more support services targeted to the trans and gender-expansive community, LGBTQ immigrant communities—really making sure we have services specifically for them.

### **Research shows that LGBTQ individuals have less access to health care. What are some of the drivers of those disparities?**

Some are economic. LGBTQ folks tend to make less money. I believe a third of trans folks in this country are trying to survive on less than \$10,000 a year. There's also racism, sexism, all of these systemic factors that make getting employment and creating a sustainable livelihood really challenging. I would also say there's a historic trust issue. I think it's getting better, but certainly we're not there yet.

### **What can providers and health systems do to better cater to the LGBTQ community?**

There is training out there. Callen-Lorde provides training specifically to health care professionals. We provide cultural competency trainings around LGBTQ issues: pronouns, intersectionality. Then I would encourage those places to keep it going, to really institutionalize it in some way, whether this is an annual training or a staff position to think about the LGBTQ community, and make sure policies and services are affirming for folks. ■

BUCK ENNIS

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# Mount Sinai Beth Israel hospital is not moving to a smaller location after all

BY SHUAN SIM

In 2016 Mount Sinai Health System announced plans to relocate Beth Israel hospital to a smaller site, filing an application to do so to the state in 2019. However, the health system exclusively told *Crain's* last Tuesday that Beth Israel won't be moved after all.

The hospital released a broadcast that day informing employees of the decision. The hospital, on East 16th Street, near Stuyvesant Square Park, was slated to downsize to a new location on the East 13th Street campus of Mount Sinai's New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. The \$600 million project would have transi-

tioned the facility, licensed for 683 beds, into one with 70 beds and an emergency room. Instead, Beth Israel will remain where it is and funnel earmarked funds into modernizing its existing campus, a Mount Sinai spokesman said. Although it is too early to say how much the revamp will cost, it is expected to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, he said.

## Rethinking the future

The pandemic has forced the health system to rethink and assess aspects of how it provides care, the spokesman said. And as Mount Sinai ramped up bed capacity to meet the demands of its community, it rethought the future of Beth Israel, he said.

"We will not need the entire current MSBI campus," the employee memo read. "Even at the very peak of the Covid-19 pandemic in our region, we did not use the whole campus. We are beginning the process of looking at our current infrastructure in order to identify the best portion of the campus to maintain and modernize."

The spokesman said that before the pandemic, approximately 120 beds, not including for mental

**"MY DAUGHTER WAS BORN THERE. I WANT TO ENSURE OTHERS CAN BE AS WELL"**

health, were in use at the hospital. Beth Israel's outpatient and inpatient behavioral health services center will be moved to 45 Rivington St., on the Lower East Side, the employee memo said. Construction has begun, and it is expected to open by late next year.

A town hall will be announced at a future date for more information, the spokesman noted.

"We will be able to provide more details and specifics soon," he said.



COURTESY OF MOUNT SINAI

The decision to bring the existing campus into the modern era has the potential to improve health care services for Lower Manhattan residents, said Councilwoman Carlina Rivera, chair of the Committee on Hospitals. Her district includes the facility.

"But we will only be able to truly address the systemic health care inequities that were exposed by Covid-19 at Mount Sinai and beyond if the full breadth of community demands are met," she said.

This includes restoring previously removed inpatient beds and medical services, such as labor and delivery, as well as a commitment to improved community feedback, Rivera said.

"My daughter was born [at Beth Israel]," said Assemblyman Harvey Epstein, who represents the district in the state Legislature. "I want to ensure others can be born there as well."

Epstein said he understands that reopening certain programs requires patient volume to be viable, and he will inform the local community to consider supporting the hospital when seeking medical services. ■

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# Diversity and inclusion: time to break barriers



## BUSINESS EVOLUTION INSIGHTS

While the subject of diversity and inclusion in the workplace has been around for several decades, there was a monumental stir in 2020. That unpredictable, unprecedented, and eye-opening year resulted in a long overdue wake-up call for organizations to begin examining more closely their D&I programs.

Improving diversity in the workplace is more important today than ever before. When deciding who they want to do business with, consumers are looking for companies that have demonstrated a commitment to D&I. Employees are searching for organizations with progressive leaders focused on transformation.

Companies need to evolve or they jeopardize a diminished market share and profitability as a result of lost talent and potential candidates. Creating an organization that holds itself accountable for D&I requires a commitment from the top. It begins with a leadership team that is laser-focused on its D&I initiatives and recognizes the need for its workforce, the resource that it will deploy to serve customers, to be diverse and to experience a culture of inclusion.

Research has proved that feeling out of place or excluded at work often results in disengagement and lower productivity. A study by the software company Oracle, "Addressing Diversity and Inclusion: Going Beyond the Benchmark," found that while senior leaders predicted that "98% of their employees felt included at work, in reality only

80% of employees reported feeling included." Likewise, "68% of respondent leaders said they believe they create an inclusive work environment, but only 36% of those employees agreed."

D&I leaders consistently affirm that inclusion is fundamental to the success of their organizations. A more diverse workforce drives innovation, particularly for incoming generations that are seeking an innovative work experience. D&I also improves the overall performance of the business by enabling employees to better empathize with consumers from diverse backgrounds. Having a workforce that is representative of the company's clients or customers yields a stronger connection between the people that work for the organization and the customers or clients they are serving.

Organizations have used a variety of strategies to implement D&I programs. Many have brought on one or more full-time diversity experts (such as a chief diversity-and-inclusion officer) to work within the organization.

The significance of the D&I officer's role has grown in the past several years. Increasing the officer's role can often be a first step toward shaping a culture in which D&I is entrenched throughout the employee experience. Using data about the rapidly changing demographics and varying needs of employees, the D&I officers can help create an atmosphere in which everyone feels welcome and valued.

To effect meaningful change, the D&I officer must report directly to the CEO and head of human resources. Doing so will enable the D&I officer to guide key decision-makers as they form a strategic plan to implement and monitor D&I practices.

As more companies step up their D&I efforts and start looking outward to find senior D&I experience, finding an experienced D&I officer is becoming more challenging. An effective D&I officer does not necessarily need a background in human resources; potential candidates for implementing

and driving D&I initiatives include individuals with a proven history of championing D&I or those skilled in influencing change, forming strategies, understanding metrics, and producing results.

Another way that organizations have worked to implement an evolutionary D&I program is by taking steps to address the perception gap between how companies and leadership think they are doing versus how employees actually feel. A key component of this evolution involves transparency into metrics as well as career development opportunities for everyone in the workforce. Leaders must examine metrics related to salaries and to the recruitment and retention rates of marginalized groups, then empower managers by providing them with the knowledge, tools, and motivation to be inclusive when hiring and developing staff.

Companies can also support diversity and inclusion efforts by integrating certain workplace offerings. Creating a benefits package that is unique to the company and reflects its values helps to attract and retain the right people. Benefits such as flexible work arrangements, floating holidays, sufficient paid time off, parental leave policies and programs that support human connectivity improve inclusion, growth and trust, and lead to a more satisfied and loyal workforce.

Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach to D&I, successful D&I executives, officers and HR leaders consistently assert one common theme: The buy-in, support, and engagement of company leadership are vital for a successful D&I program. Effective CEOs and executive leadership teams that are engaged in D&I efforts must meet regularly to review and track the D&I program's performance.

When a board or leadership team compares its D&I performance to the goals outlined for the D&I program, the organization sees results. In contrast, when a board does not track performance, D&I efforts typically fall to the bottom of the organization's priority list.

Soliciting feedback from employees sends the message that the company wants to make positive change. Whether the organization uses a survey,

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Nichol Chiarella, CPA, MST**  
Partner and Empowering Diversity and Gender Equality (CC EDGE) Co-Chair Committee Leader



**Laura M. Crowley, CPA, MBA**  
Director and Empowering Diversity and Gender Equality (CC EDGE) Co-Chair Committee Leader



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online tool, forum, or one-on-one meetings with top executives, the expectation of employees is that leadership is ready to take action. When it comes to attracting top talent, most job seekers are looking to work for an employer that demonstrates a strong commitment to D&I.

There has always been an ethical purpose for employing and serving a diverse group of people and making sure that their contributions are valued. The business case for creating a diverse and inclusive environment is now stronger than ever. Developing a more balanced workforce and ensuring the organization's culture is inclusive will build a brand's reputation as a good employer, one that values people. Customers favor brands and companies that care about helping others.

By ensuring that diversity and inclusion are embedded

throughout the organization, the business creates an environment in which employees of all backgrounds are aligned toward the common goal of making sure the company is successful.

Citrin Cooperman has recognized the importance of diversity since it opened its doors in 1979. For more than 40 years, our firm has benefited from a richness of ideas and experiences as a result of the diverse backgrounds of our people. Our company culture has been enhanced by welcoming and celebrating all backgrounds. We acknowledge that we must continuously reexamine our D&I efforts to remain a leading firm within the accounting industry.

At Citrin Cooperman, diversity has never been about checking a box; it has always been about providing the highest quality of service to our clients by bringing to them an innovative team of dedicated professionals. ■



CATALDO'S is using its PPP money on rent and utilities.

PROSPECT HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

# Second round of PPP funds gave small businesses something new: a financial cushion

BY CARA EISENPRESS

At the Mary Mitchell Family Youth Center in the Bronx, the executive director can now run her summer camp. Red Rabbit, a food vendor in Manhattan for schools, has stronger-than-ever relationships with its customers. The owner of Cataldo's, an Italian restaurant in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, is repaying her back rent and an emergency loan so she can go back to serving pasta debt-free.

Two weeks after the federal Paycheck Protection Program ended, some of the city's small businesses are finding themselves in a new-to-them position: with cash in hand.

**"THE FIRST ROUND WAS SURVIVAL. THE SECOND IS PARTLY INVESTMENT MONEY"**

The first round of the program boxed out many small businesses because funds ran out before they could access the application. The second round reduced the amount that recipients had to use on payroll.

That made the money from the loans more fungible, allowing smaller companies to strategize about the best use for their dollars rather than having to use them mainly for payroll or risk their ability to apply for loan forgiveness.

"The first round was survival," said Carlos Naudon, president of

Ponce Bank, which arranged the loans to the three aforementioned city businesses. "The second is partly survival and partly investment money."

Ponce, which is designated as a community-development financial institution, funded 985 loans during the first round of the PPP. During the second round, it made 4,440 loans after drumming up demand by looking for underserved businesses, especially among the city's minority communities, and providing in-person help to compile and submit paperwork, Naudon said.

As of Feb. 27, New York City companies had received almost \$25 billion from the program, which ended May 3. In the second round, nearly a third of the disbursed dollars were in smaller loans—less than \$150,000—compared with less than

10% during the initial round.

The disbursements are allowing some firms to invest in their core programs and their relationships with clients.

## Ability to save

The Mitchell Center, a nonprofit that gets most of its funding from the city, faced more than the average hurdle because its main building for programs such as summer camp is part of the Department of Education.

"We couldn't even get in the building," said Aleyna Rodriguez,

the executive director. A first-round PPP loan went to pay staff and rent, as Rodriguez pivoted to emergency food distribution and other services.

But as post-pandemic normalcy returns, the second draw is giving Rodriguez a chance to plan an educational and fun summer and fall without draining her organization's bank account. She is trying to keep activities local and bringing on three staff members for now. Soon, she said, she wants to hire security officers so the building can stay open until 9 p.m.

"These loans are going to give us a cushion," she said, "allowing us to save the funds we would be using for payroll to hang on to them a little longer, to be able to continue to grow."

At Red Rabbit, the school food supplier, much of the PPP money went to its intended goal of keeping staff on the payroll even as operations and products changed to meet the pandemic moment. But second-round draws allowed Chief Executive Rhys Powell to work closely with the firm's customers, which are charter schools and pre-kindergarten programs in New York as well as entire school districts beyond the city.

Although the company's switch to home delivery did not turn out to be a long-term financial win, nor

terribly useful when children returned to school, its willingness to cater to what customers needed turned out to be money well spent on loyalty and retention, Powell said.

## PPP \$\$\$

**985**  
NUMBER of Paycheck Protection Program loans Ponce Bank funded during the first round

**4,440**  
NUMBER the bank funded during the program's second round

"Our school partners were going through trauma and chaos, and they feel a stronger connection to our organization," he said. "Going forward, we can leverage those relationships."

For Cecilia Cataldo's restaurant and other small businesses, resilience means having money in the bank and little to no debt. Cataldo took out a \$150,000 emergency disaster loan to help get through last year when, after shutting down for four months, restaurants had "no money coming in and money going out." After missing the first round of the program, she used her PPP loan to pay down rent and utilities.

Business is thriving again, she said, but she is still catching up on payments.

"The money that's owed is still owed," she said of the loan, which she has to start paying back next month.

## Unsustainable debt

Not all small businesses are faring as well, of course. A February survey from the Local Initiatives Support Corp. showed that

three-quarters of all minority-owned small businesses expected to close this year without relief, though more grants have arrived and restrictions have loosened since then.

There's also the question of repaying back rent, which can amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Individual grants of up to \$50,000 from the state's \$800 million fund are unlikely to be enough to cover more than a year of retail rent.

For many businesses, even small amounts of debt on the balance sheet are unsustainable, said Ester Fuchs, a Columbia University professor who conducted a small-business survey last month.

"There is a certain amount of debt they can take on, but it is clear that once you pass that threshold, it'll be difficult to survive," Fuchs said.

Freedom from PPP debt is an open question. If funds are used in unapproved ways, they do not convert to grants and must be paid back. Naudon said his bank will be helping recipients with their forgiveness applications during the next 10 months. Some 20% have already been forgiven, he said.

Ponce, he said, is working on a program to let borrowers make small daily payments on their loans to help them accumulate cash. The bank, he added, also is developing products to ease access to loans for companies that have benefited from seeing their PPP loans as investment capital and want cash to keep growing. ■

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

**D**uring this period of racial reckoning in America, *Crain's* feels it is a great time to recognize the people and employers in New York building inclusive workplaces. They realize that it is not only the right thing to do, but is something that can increase productivity and profits for their organizations.

White heterosexual men do not have a monopoly on talent. So to tap the best people, it is imperative that employers make their workplace as welcoming as possible to people of color, women and LGBTQ individuals.

Unfortunately, even the most well-intentioned employers that have had diversity and inclusion programs

in place for years still have a ways to go, *Crain's* reporter Cara Eisenpress notes. American Express is an example. Although 48% of its workforce is from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, only 15% of its executives are Black or Hispanic.

As *Crain's* reporter Ryan Deffenbaugh points out, diversity is an area where employers make lots of mistakes. The field is packed with land mines that managers need to navigate, from not having clear goals to ignoring inclusion after making minority hires. That is why it is worthwhile to recognize those who have been willing to do the hard work and why *Crain's* has prepared this special section.

—Robert Hordt, editor

## D&I AWARD WINNERS

*Crain's* will announce the winners of its first Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Awards in a webcast on July 15 from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

The winners—eight individuals and three employers—will be selected from 37 finalists in five categories: Champions of Change, Top Diversity & Inclusion Officers, Board Heroes, Civic Heroes and Diversity Champions (employers).

Profiles of the finalists start on page 20.

Michael Garner, chief diversity officer of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, will deliver the keynote address.

To register to attend, visit [CrainsNewYork.com/DiversityEvent](https://CrainsNewYork.com/DiversityEvent).



# George Floyd murder pushes top NYC firms to double down on diversity

BY CARA EISENPRESS

Last summer, when outrage over George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis evolved into nationwide protests, employees and customers called on New York City's companies to take racism seriously.

The reckoning pushed many firms to announce a new commitment to diversity, both in how they hire and support employees from underrepresented backgrounds and in how they relate to the consumers and communities they serve.

This year the New York City corporations on Forbes' list of the most diverse companies in the U.S. have something in common: They had already sought to improve diversity and equity long before the conversation took precedence in boardrooms and cubicles.

Yet even those with a decades-old pledge to recruit and promote employees in underrepresented groups say that 2020 pushed them to make bolder plans, spend more money on their efforts and build better methods for recruiting workers from all backgrounds.

"We are proud of the culture we've built," said Robert Childs, an executive vice president at American Express in the company's office of enterprise inclusion, diversity and business engagement. "But there's more to do."

**"WE ARE PROUD OF THE CULTURE WE'VE BUILT. BUT THERE'S MORE TO DO"**

The multinational financial services company, headquartered in Battery Park City, said that in 2020, 48% of its U.S. workforce came from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, but among executives the share was lower: 10% Black, 5% Hispanic and 12% Asian.

The company ranked 24th on Forbes' list of the best employers for diversity in 2021, and fourth among New York-based companies.

Last year the company established Childs' division, which reports to the chief executive and coordinates all efforts around diversity and inclusion.

## Pay equity

It also pushed further on a 2019 goal around pay parity. Originally, the company promised that differences in salary among employees with the same job, level and location would be statistically insignificant. Now the goal is to achieve complete equity in pay for the same position, regardless of gender, race or ethnicity, in the next four years.

Likewise, Deloitte, a professional services and accounting firm, which is 28th on Forbes' national list and fifth in New York, decided last summer to solidify the push for equity for Black employees, creating the Black Action Council, its most significant diversity move of 2020, said Roger Arrieux, the company's New York managing partner.

Such initiatives take money, and the leading city firms are laying it out.

American Express said that it would pour \$1 billion into its diversity-focused initiatives and begin spending \$750 million annually with diverse suppliers by the end of 2024. Among other plans, Deloitte is spending \$200 million by 2025 with Black-owned and Black-led businesses.

Some firms are consulting with workers about causes beyond their office doors. Booz Allen Hamilton, a Virginia-based management consulting firm with an office in New York, matched all donations from employees in a campaign that broke its philanthropic records, raising \$565,000 for organizations committed to racial and social equity, such as Black Girls Code.

Diversifying the executive ranks remains a challenge even at many of the firms noted for their success. But strategies for bringing



**DELOITTE'S**  
Arrieux said the firm is creating a Black Action Council.

BUCK ENNIS

in new, diverse talent are taking shape. For Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, which is second in the city on Forbes' list, that has meant becoming part of the New York Jobs CEO Council and OneTen, a group of companies that has pledged to create 1 million careers for Black Americans in 10 years. And a new apprentice program with Careerwise New York will begin this fall for high school students.

"If employers want impactful and lasting change on the diversity of our employees, we have to examine our processes and re-

move barriers such as, but not limited to, education requirements and employee referral programs," said Tomya Watt, the company's chief diversity officer.

## Diversity audits

Deloitte is likewise expanding relationships with workforce development groups, including the Association of Latino Professionals for America, Out & Equal, Grace Hopper, the National Association of Black Accountants and the Posse Foundation.

Audits of a company's diversity standing



**JOHNSON** said diversity goals that are specific are more apt to be successful.

BUCK ENNIS

## Why companies fall short on their diversity

BY RYAN DEFFENBAUGH

Talk is cheap and the predictable pledges from companies in the past year to do more to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace were appreciated but met with a healthy dose of skepticism.

It's not like companies don't try. U.S. employers spend about \$8 billion each year on diversity training, yet a majority of employees feel that such programs do not successfully address workplace discrimination, according to a May report from the Boston Consulting Group.

"We've made enormous progress, but there is still tremendous work to be done for historically underrepresented groups in the workplace," said Gabrielle Novacek, the lead author of the Boston Consulting Group's report.

Crain's asked experts in the field about what mistakes companies make in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and how they can be more effective.

**Lack of clear goals.** "Companies go wrong because they make a statement, but there is no true strategy behind the words," said Kenneth Johnson, president of East Coast Executives, a recruitment firm in Harlem

specializing in diversity. "Anyone can stand up and say they are going to get better, but what are the metrics behind that?" The more specific companies can be about the goals, he said, the more likely they are to achieve greater buy-in and succeed.

**Overlooking inclusion.** Diversity is what can be measured—race, gender, sexual orientation—while inclusion is what an employer does each day to create a fair work environment, said Paolo Gaudiano, a professor at the New York University Stern School of Business. "Unless you have an inclusive organization, you will be unable to sustain diversity and you will have a less satisfied and productive organization overall," Gaudiano said.

**Misunderstanding employees' needs.** Novacek said there is a tendency for companies to group employees from underrepresented backgrounds and assume their needs are the same in the workplace. "You have to talk to your employers and find out what matters," Novacek said. "It sounds simple, but we don't always acknowledge that you are a complex person with many aspects to who you are."

**Lack of investment in training.** Companies that don't





## NYC's TOP EMPLOYERS FOR DIVERSITY

New York City companies on the 2021 America's Best Employers for Diversity list

| NYC RANK/<br>(NATIONAL RANK) | NAME/<br>INDUSTRIES  | NUMBER OF<br>EMPLOYEES | YEAR<br>FOUNDED |
|------------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 (10)                       | <b>Interpublic Group (IPG)</b><br><i>Media &amp; advertising</i>                     | 54,000                 | 1930            |
| 2 (17)                       | <b>Memorial Sloan<br/>Kettering Cancer Center</b><br><i>Health care &amp; social</i> | 20,500                 | 1884            |
| 3 (21)                       | <b>Pfizer</b><br><i>Drugs &amp;<br/>biotechnology</i>                                | 88,300                 | 1849            |
| 4 (24)                       | <b>American Express</b><br><i>Banking &amp; financial<br/>services</i>               | 64,500                 | 1850            |
| 5 (28)                       | <b>Deloitte</b><br><i>Professional services</i>                                      | 330,000                | 1845            |
| 6 (33)                       | <b>United Nations</b><br><i>Health care &amp; social</i>                             | 36,000                 | 1945            |
| 7 (61)                       | <b>ViacomCBS</b><br><i>Media</i>   | 22,109                 | 1986            |
| 8 (71)                       | <b>Bristol Myers Squibb</b><br><i>Drugs &amp;<br/>biotechnology</i>                  | 30,250                 | 1887            |
| 9 (82)                       | <b>New York Life</b><br><i>Insurance</i>   | 23,000                 | 1845            |
| 10 (93)                      | <b>Foot Locker</b><br><i>Clothing, shoes &amp;<br/>sports equipment</i>              | 52,267                 | 1974            |
| 11 (113)                     | <b>TIAA</b><br><i>Banking &amp; financial<br/>services</i>                           | 9,399                  | 1918            |
| 12 (119)                     | <b>KPMG</b><br><i>Professional services</i>  | 35,000                 | 1987            |
| 13 (125)                     | <b>Citigroup</b><br><i>Banking &amp; financial<br/>services</i>                      | 200,000                | 1812            |
| 14 (126)                     | <b>JetBlue Airways</b><br><i>Transportation &amp;<br/>logistics</i>                  | 22,000                 | 1999            |
| 15 (132)                     | <b>Assurant</b><br><i>Insurance</i>  | 14,200                 | 1892            |

**SOURCE:** America's Best Employers for Diversity 2021, a national ranking of 500 companies, was published by *Forbes*. This list shows the top 15 companies headquartered in the five boroughs of New York City. *Forbes* partnered with market research company Statista to survey 50,000 Americans working for businesses with at least 1,000 employees. Employees rated their companies on criteria such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation equality, and general diversity. Finalists were chosen based on most recommendations, most diverse boards and executive ranks, and most proactive diversity initiatives.

are becoming more common at public firms. In a letter sent to President Joe Biden in May, city Comptroller Scott Stringer called for the Securities and Exchange Commission to require such disclosures, arguing that this would "provide investors and other stakeholders standardized, quantitative, relevant and comparable employment data across companies and industries, so that we can assess the representation and progress of Black employees and other employees of color and women at various levels of the corporation." ■

## promises—and how that can change

expand their pool of recruits will struggle to meet any diversity and inclusion commitments. "We are seeing progress, but there needs to be deeper investment at the local level," said Jose Ortiz Jr., CEO of the New York City Employment and Training Coalition. "Not just financial resources, but really in terms of time. Employers should be part of developing the curriculum and proactive in finding quality candidates."

**Not empowering diversity officers.** "Chief diversity officer" is an increasingly common title in the C-suite. About two-thirds of S&P 500 CDOs were appointed in the past three years, research firm Forrester found. But many of those officers do not have a budget or a direct line to the CEO. "As companies seek quick fixes, appointing a CDO is seen as a commitment to change," said Katy Tynan, a principal analyst with Forrester. "But without influence or resources, many CDOs report feeling frustrated and powerless."

**Ignoring the business case.** Corporate jobs focused on diversity, equity and inclusion are not revenue-generating roles, and therefore do not

always get buy-in through a company, Johnson said. But there is a large body of research indicating diverse workplaces perform better. "It's extremely important that you can deliver the business case for diversity and inclusion and allow people to see a diverse workforce has an impact on the bottom line," Johnson said. As put by Gaudiano, "We diversify our portfolio, companies diversify their inventories and their suppliers. We recognize that diversifying works better, but that gets overlooked when it comes to the workforce."

**A look ahead.** The next six months will be crucial, Novacek said. Employers in New York are increasingly returning to the office. Remote work created challenges for many employers, but it also allowed for flexibility that responded to a diverse range of needs for people. "We are rewriting some of the rules," Novacek said. "We could actually make the workplace more flexible to accommodate a greater set of needs and that creates an opportunity to address historic challenges." ■



BUCK ENNIS

**STRIBLING-KIVLAN** has experienced hurtful anti-gay comments firsthand.

## LGBTQ community slowly gains acceptance in New York's corporate world

BY NATALIE SACHMECHI

**W**hen Elizabeth Stribling-Kivlan plans a vacation, she's reminded that not every place is as accepting of the LGBTQ community as New York City.

She's sure to pick a spot on the map where she and her wife won't be targeted or jailed for being gay.

Even from the progressive bastion of New York, it's clear to her that homophobia is a real thing.

"Things that have been said to me in my life are not only hurtful, but sad," she said. "I had a will when I was 25 because I was afraid of what could happen to me in another state."

Twenty-six states criminalize behavior that carries a risk of transmitting HIV. Until this year, Alabama's sex education law included language that said students should be taught that homosexuality is illegal.

But as a senior managing director at real estate brokerage Compass, she doesn't have to hide who she is.

As the daughter of Elizabeth Stribling, the founder of brokerage Stribling Associates, she spent her whole life around the LGBTQ community in New York City. Luckily, residential real estate has been very accepting and inclusive of its members, she said.

"When I ran Stribling, it was my intention and greatest hope to foster an environment where you could be yourself even when you couldn't be that way outside of the office," she said. "It's important to not only have a home in your personal life, but in your professional life too."

In January, New York became the largest city to recognize LGBTQ-owned companies as minority-owned businesses, giving them access to billions of dollars in city contracts as well as other services offered by the city's Department of Small Business Services.

The city also accounts for about 12% of the nation's LGBTQ-owned businesses, according to a report from the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce.

Stribling-Kivlan isn't the only one who has seen the change in real es-

tate.

More than 13 years ago, when Justin Huebener, a senior vice president at L+L Holding Company, began his career in real estate, companies weren't so enthusiastic about participating in Pride Month or celebrating LGBTQ culture. But as a member of the diversity committee at the Young Men's/Women's Real Estate Association of New York, Huebener makes it a point to raise awareness in the industry.

"I improve the workplace by speaking up about my sexual orientation," he said. "I identify as someone who is willing to have those conversations."

In the past decade, Huebener has seen companies grow in their awareness of the LGBTQ community. More of them, including L+L, are celebrating Pride and engaging in those conversations on social media, he said.

### Internal biases

To change barriers for LGBTQ employees in the corporate sector, those companies have to promote them, said Thomas Chernick, a director at the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce in New York. "Unfortunately," he said, "even seemingly 'friendly' industries can have their internal biases and blind sides."

Real estate firms and banks have been ramping up their efforts to promote diversity in the workplace through the trending chief diversity officer role. Companies such as CBRE, Cushman & Wakefield, JLL and Tishman Speyer and banks such as Citigroup and Goldman Sachs have appointed new people in the past year to head diversity-and-inclusion efforts.

"Chief diversity officers are a great start on the journey to workplace inclusivity," Chernick said, "but the company's leaders have to listen to, and collaborate with, those professionals to be truly successful."

Employees need to speak up about their needs, Huebener said.

"Change is hard, but it requires a commitment to make things better," he said. "What I say to my colleagues is, 'You should never let your own insecurity hinder your progress.'" ■

## OTHER VOICES

# Infrastructure initiatives are an opportunity to correct past misdeeds

**A**midst impactful, nationwide protests against institutionalized racism and calls for change from our leaders, we have started to come face to face with the systems designed to marginalize certain communities and people of color for centuries.

Our leaders have finally begun to call out projects that have led to segregation, displacement, resource deserts and lasting economic and health challenges.

Infrastructure is the backbone of our nation, but throughways, ports, power plants and waste treatment facilities have been historically sited to racially divide our cities and disproportionately place the burden of pollution and poor air quality on communities of color.

There is no better time to think critically about who infrastructure does and does not

think big and move on a robust federal infrastructure plan the likes of which we have never seen before.

### Equitable future

Investing in thoughtful infrastructure is a sure way to create jobs, repair our outdated systems and provide a stable future. At the same time, we must look inward to guarantee that an equitable future is built by a workforce that reflects our nation's diversity.

Not only is this a historic opportunity to deliver resources and public goods to underserved communities, but this is a watershed moment to support minority- and women-owned enterprises and increase diversity at every level of the building industry.

Nationwide, we should seize the moment and double down on our commitment to uplifting marginalized communities while reimagining the systems that have traditionally oppressed them.

Infrastructure spending done right has proven to be an investment in MWBEs. New York State's Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program is a strong example. Since the advent of the program, the building industry has had the greatest demonstrated re-



ISTOCK



ELIZABETH VELEZ

## THIS IS A WATERSHED MOMENT TO SUPPORT AND INCREASE DIVERSITY

serve, invest in public works that drive economic growth and rebuild a nation that works for us all. Covid-19 has forced us to

sponse. MWBEs won more than \$2.93 billion in state contracts during the fiscal year ended in March 2019, 60% of which came from contracts for construction services.

Still, in a \$52 billion market, we must do more to be equitable and represent all of our communities. While New York has been a leader in investing in MWBEs, we need to hold the city and state accountable to be sure that infrastructure capital requests benefit minority and disadvantaged communities.

We are on the brink of an incredible mo-

ment for infrastructure. As long as our commitment to equity and inclusion is intentional and intersectional, we have a real opportunity to uplift marginalized communities while rebuilding the systems that have caused real and lasting harm for far too long. ■

*Elizabeth Velez is president of the Velez Organization, a family-owned construction firm, and chairwoman of the New York Building Congress.*

## OTHER VOICES

# Corporate America needs to put words into action to create a truly diverse workforce

**I**t's been a year since George Floyd's murder, and it's no secret that we are witnessing a profound shift in how we view and address racial justice in this country.

In New York and beyond, companies have stepped up in a big way to show their support in the last year—announcing programs worth billions to support Black communities, launching new diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, and condemning racism through corporate statements and pledges.

However, demands for accountability from corporate America are still as loud as ever, and companies should be reflecting on whether they've actually made one year's worth of progress toward their goals. Have they actually hired Black and brown talent? Promoted people of color into leadership roles? Upskilled diverse talent for higher-paying, thriving wage jobs? If we're serious about moving past "statements of support," there are several core changes that companies must make.

The first is addressing implicit bias in hiring. Even when companies set ambitious hiring goals, Black and brown individuals are often rejected without reason or because of artificial barriers. Companies should be turning to DEI consulting firms

to better understand how bias plays out in their workplace so that they can build in processes that eliminate hiring biases that may be preventing diverse talent from joining their teams. They can also participate in corporate programs like Diverse by Design to get the resources they need to recruit, retain, and cultivate diverse talent with intention.



KENNETH WALKER

### Focus on skills, not degrees

Companies also need to expand their hiring pipelines beyond applicants with postsecondary degrees. When it comes to inclusive hiring, we often talk about "non-traditional talent," but this

label implies that companies are somehow hiring talent that is not as qualified as more traditional options. This is simply not the case, which is why placing a higher value on the merits of workforce training programs, apprenticeships, and professional certificates is more important than ever. By rethinking job parameters and focusing on the skills applicants can bring to the table, companies can build a more inclusive workplace while also supporting our economic recovery.

Looking ahead, we need to be aware that spending more on diversity programs isn't



BLOOMBERG

the same as building diversity, equity, and inclusion cultures. Like me, diversity architects of change and transformation don't just want messages of support. We want to see dedicated budgets and key performance indicators that prove you support training, hiring, and creating workplaces where we

can thrive. ■

*Kenneth Walker is the executive vice president of diversity and operational excellence at Per Scholas, a nonprofit that provides technology training to unemployed or underemployed adults.*

# We're proud to have Ray Garcia recognized as a finalist for the Crain's Champions of Change Award.

**Congratulations to all of  
this year's honorees.**

*"We can watch change happen passively or we can participate and lead actively. My personal passion aligns with Empire's incredible culture and mission, which gives me the opportunity to use my role to advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion."*

**Ray Garcia**

Sr. Human Resources Business Partner  
Empire BlueCross BlueShield



**Empire**   
BLUECROSS BLUESHIELD

An Anthem Company

**EmpireBlue.com**

**The Whole Health Company**

# Champions of Change This award recognizes leaders at a company or organization who have promoted initiatives advancing diversity and inclusion

**DR. YVETTE CALDERON**

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Dr. Yvette Calderon works as the associate dean of diversity enhancement at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where she leads recruiting and mentorship programs for students who are under-represented in the fields of medicine.



**CALDERON**

She understands firsthand how valuable this type of mentorship experience can be.

“I was mentored in high school by an incredible philanthropist who had a program for minority kids in the city,” Calderon said. “On Saturdays and Sundays, we would spend our mornings and afternoons either at Mount Sinai Hospital or Columbia, and we would take these classes from medical students. The hope was that you would be in a medical school, and you could visualize yourself as a medical student there.”

Calderon has worked on faculty development programs at Albert Einstein College that aim to improve the retention and promotion of under-represented groups at the medical school, and she has paid her own high school mentorship program forward by mentoring several students of her own who now work as doctors, teachers and researchers.

“I’ve mentored many of those who have gone on to do public health work,” she said. “They’re amazing individuals, and it’s really wonderful to see them on the other side when they’re a physician or they’re in organizations doing public health.”

– Eddie Small

**“I WAS MENTORED IN HIGH SCHOOL BY AN INCREDIBLE PHILANTHROPIST WHO HAD A PROGRAM FOR MINORITY KIDS”**

**ZOILA DEL CASTILLO**

New York State Office of the Attorney General

Zoila Del Castillo works as an assistant attorney general in the criminal enforcement and financial crimes bureau of the New York state attorney general’s office. She focuses on investigating and prosecuting



**CASTILLO**

financial crimes and, as a member of the diversity committee, promotes diversity and inclusion in the office.

Castillo, who was raised in the Bronx, wanted to become an attorney to help make the criminal justice system better reflect the communities it serves. In addition to her work in the attorney general’s office, Castillo is on the board of directors at the Dominican Bar Association, where she organized a pandemic relief initiative to provide groceries to public housing residents and immigrants.

In addition, she is on the board of LatinoJustice PRLDEF, formerly the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, where she organized a presentation by voting rights attorneys to discuss the impact of the pandemic on the 2020 elections. She is a 2021 fellow in the Council for Urban Professionals program, a leadership development initiative for professionals of color who are dedicated to serving their communities.

Castillo is a strong believer in mentorship and pipeline programs that help students move from one level of education to the next. Both programs have helped her tremendously throughout her career, she said.

“I wanted to be part of a system that was representative of everyone,” she said. “That’s what it means to be fair and just.”

– Eddie Small

**DR. MILL ETIENNE**

New York Medical College

When Dr. Mill Etienne joined the board of the New York State Neurological Society, there were no women and no other minority members. Today the majority of board members are women or minorities, thanks in no small part to his efforts.



**ETIENNE**

“People become doctors, and they don’t think that they’re smart enough or qualified to teach the next crop of medical students,” said Etienne, vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion at New York Medical College, “so we have to do a better job of retaining our minorities, retaining our women, retaining our people from the LGBT communities—having them realize that you, too, can actually teach that next generation of physicians.”

Etienne is a member of the medical college’s anti-racism task force, which has examined the school’s curriculum to look for and remove evidence of racial discrimination. He has sponsored the Medical Student for a Day program, which gives students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine a chance to learn more about medical school.

Having more women and minorities as teachers will go a long way toward making the medical field more diverse, Etienne said. People will be more likely to see it as an industry they can break into if their instructors look like them, he explained.

“You start early—making them aware that it’s a possibility when they’re in grade school or junior high school,” Etienne said. “The biggest thing is letting young kids know that you can do it.”

– Eddie Small

**JULIE FINK**

Kaplan Hecker & Fink

As one of the youngest managing partners and named partners at a major law firm, Julie Fink leads a diverse commercial and public interest litigation practice and oversees all aspects of the firm’s management. As a result of her leadership,



**FINK**

the firm surpasses top-tier law firms in employee compensation and benefits, which include a cutting-edge parental-leave policy.

Fink’s work has been at the forefront of civil rights and social justice issues. As an associate, she and partner Roberta Kaplan represented Edith Windsor in the United States v. Windsor, the landmark Supreme Court case that deemed the federal same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional.

She also helped co-found the TimesUp Legal Defense Fund, which has raised more than \$22 million to defray legal costs for women who have experienced workplace sexual harassment. Fink also sued 25 alleged white supremacists on behalf of people injured in the violence in Charlottesville, Va. She frequently advises on employment-related matters and performs internal investigations regarding allegations of discrimination and harassment.

Her accomplishments have been recognized by major legal publications, and she was a 2019 Crain’s New York ’40 Under 40. She serves on the Board of Directors of New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.

– Evan Cooper

**RAYMOND GARCIA**

Anthem

As he supports the businesses of Empire BlueCross BlueShield in New York and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia—two units of one of the nation’s largest health benefits companies—Raymond Garcia is on a mission: He is committed to



**GARCIA**

using his corporate role to advocate for inclusion and diversity.

As a senior human resources business partner, Garcia’s believes embracing diversity, equity and inclusion is a business imperative; he also believes there is no room for complacency. He has five goals: advancing the conversation, addressing workplace inequities, assessing organizational structures to ensure fairness and equity, working to recognize and address unconscious biases, and listening to associates to create meaningful change.

Garcia’s more than 25 years of experience in employee relations and talent management has prepared him to address issues affecting everyone in the organization. As a certified Anthem Coach, he helps the firm’s employees develop personal well-being plans.

In addition, he has helped develop his company’s relationship with American Corporate Partners, a national nonprofit focused on helping returning veterans and active duty spouses find their next careers through one-on-one mentoring, networking and online career advice.

– Evan Cooper

**GARCIA BELIEVES EMBRACING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IS A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE**





TEAMWORK.  
INTEGRITY.  
COMMITMENT.

**For over 100 years, Turner has extended our reach well beyond the built environment.**

We encourage a dynamic culture that adds value and fosters growth for our company, our industry partners, our clients and the communities in which we build.

# Champions of Change

This award recognizes leaders at a company or organization who have promoted initiatives advancing diversity and inclusion

## NYC's Top Employers for Diversity List

**330K**

**PEOPLE EMPLOYED** by Deloitte, the largest company by number of employees on the list

**9K**

**PEOPLE EMPLOYED** by TIAA, the smallest company by number of employees on the list

**67K**

**THE AVERAGE NUMBER** of employees for companies on the list

**1999**

**YEAR THE YOUNGEST** company on the list, JetBlue Airways, was founded.

SOURCE: Forbes

### MATT HYDE

Turner Construction Co.

Matt Hyde is a project manager at Turner Construction Co., where he has worked for 17 years.



HYDE

Hyde has been a particularly strong supporter of LGBTQ+ rights during his time at the company. In 2013 he co-founded Turner's Pride Network, an

employee resource group meant to celebrate diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity. The Pride Network is now led by a board of 13 people, and it has 10 chapters across the company.

In 2018 Hyde co-founded the Build Out Alliance, a nonprofit that advocates for the LGBTQ+ community throughout the city's design and construction industry. The group marched with 200 professionals in the industry at the 2019 WorldPride parade in the city. He is part of Turner's Inclusion Action Committee, a group of employees meant to serve as a resource for issues stemming from race-, gender- or sexual orientation-based inequality.

Construction continues to be an old-fashioned industry, Hyde said, and although companies had been taking diversity more seriously in recent years, it was not until the events surrounding the murder of George Floyd in 2020 that the industry really started to give primacy to such concerns.

"I would say in the last two to three years that diversity and inclusion have been at the forefront, or more at the forefront," he said. "It really took George Floyd's murder, unfortunately, and Black Lives Matter's resurgence for my company to really invest in diversity, equity and inclusion."

- Eddie Small

### ELISE DREW LEÓN

School of American Ballet at Lincoln Center

Elise Drew León joined the School of American Ballet at Lincoln Center in



LEÓN

late 2017 as its director of diversity, equity and inclusion. In addition, she serves on Lincoln Center's campus DEI leadership committee, collaborating

with other resident organizations to foster inclusion for all employees.

A dancer herself, León has performed around the world and served as a cultural ambassador for the U.S. Department of State while on tour in Africa when she was a member of the Limón Dance Company from 2010 to 2017. She also has taught dance at Adelphi University, The Ailey School, Bryant Park Moves, LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts and New York University.

Among her many honors, León was named a 2020 CUP fellow by the Council of Urban Professionals, a program for up-and-coming, diverse business and civic leaders. She also was the recipient of Westover School's 2018 Distinguished Young Alumna Award, the 2015 Puerto Rican Day Parade's Rising Star in the Performing Arts citation, a 2014 Princess Grace dance honorarium, a BAM/DeVos Institute for Arts Management fellowship and the inaugural Dance/USA's John R. Munger research fellowship.

Dedicated to ensuring that the performing arts are inclusive and equitable, León was designated a 2021 diversity in arts leadership mentor by Americans for the Arts, a Washington-based nonprofit.

- Evan Cooper

### DEREK MELVIN

Morgan Stanley

Derek Melvin learned about the importance of mentorship early in his career, when he was still applying for internships as a college student.



MELVIN

"The guy who was trying to recruit me at Morgan Stanley basically said that if I came to Morgan

Stanley for the summer, the only way that it wouldn't work out well is if I really messed up," he said. "And that wouldn't happen because he wouldn't let it happen."

Melvin has spent his entire 16-year financial career at Morgan Stanley, where he has been a tireless advocate for diversifying a notoriously homogeneous industry. He had the idea in 2020 to build the company's Experienced Professionals Program, a diversity-based development and recruiting initiative, and he was asked to join Morgan Stanley's Diversity and Inclusion Council earlier this year.

He is now a mentor himself to several younger employees at the company and leads a multicultural team, with two of his Black vice presidents getting promoted to the executive director level in the past two years.

Employees seeing people who look like them reach higher levels at companies such as Morgan Stanley plays a huge role in helping the firms become more diverse, Melvin said.

"People need to be able to look up and feel that there's a path for them to succeed and to climb the ladder at these prestigious, challenging organizations," he said. "The effect you can have on the junior talent just hearing your story is very powerful."

- Eddie Small

### MARCOS TORRES

RBC Capital Markets

Childhood poverty and homelessness are not typically part of the background of executives on Wall Street.



TORRES

But Marcos Torres, who heads communications, media and entertainment investment banking in the U.S. for RBC Capital Markets, where he

is a managing director, is probably not the typical Wall Street executive.

Torres, one of six children, lost his parents at a very young age and experienced a challenging and humbling childhood. With the help of many, he became the first in his family to graduate from high school and college. As a result, he is committed to giving back to his community, including serving as a role model to underprivileged young people.

At his firm, where he sits on the U.S. investment banking executive management committee, he co-chairs the U.S. diversity leadership council and its multicultural employee alliance. In addition, he is a director of three high-profile national nonprofits: the Hispanic Federation, the Council of Urban Professionals and the Latino Donor Collaborative.

Torres has been recognized as one of America's young and emerging leaders by *Hispanic Executive* magazine and the Council of Urban Professionals, which selected him as a CUP Catalyst. Ballet Hispanico honored him with its 2018 Civic Inspiration Award.

- Evan Cooper

**TORRES WAS THE FIRST IN HIS FAMILY TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE**



# Top Diversity and Inclusion Officers

This award recognizes individuals who have successfully steered the diversity agenda throughout their organization and the wider community

## MICHAEL J. GARNER

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

If there were a Michael Jordan or Wayne Gretzky of professional diversity, equity and inclusion practices, that person would probably be a lot like Michael J. Garner.



**GARNER**

In just over 10 years as the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's first chief diversity officer, Garner

has single-handedly transformed the largest transportation network in North America into one of the most powerful organizations in the country in promoting economic equity for minorities and women and the businesses they own.

"We do everything big," Garner said of the MTA. "We're not only one of the region's largest employers, but one of the region's largest employers of minorities and women."

Garner ensures that the recruitment of the MTA's 70,000 employees is diverse and inclusive and that their work is done in a bias-free environment. But the hallmark of his MTA career has been overseeing the growth in the contracting and procurement process of the authority's minority- and/or women-owned business enterprises. As the architect of the MTA's small-business mentoring program, Garner has overseen the allotment of billions of dollars in contracts to business owners who are minorities, women, veterans, disabled people and those who otherwise might be excluded from the procurement process.

Garner has guided the MTA's spending on MWBEs to historic levels. Ten years ago the agency was awarding an average of \$116 million per year to MWBEs, a 6% inclusion rate. Today the MTA is one of the few government agencies in the country awarding more than \$1.1 billion in contracts to MWBEs in a fiscal year—a 27% inclusion rate.

"Our theory is tax dollars should be spent in a cost-effective manner but also in an inclusive manner," Garner said.

— Brian Pascus

## LYNN LOACKER

Davis Wright Tremaine

Lynn Loacker's passion for diversity, equity and inclusion came out of personal experience. Despite becoming a law partner in the late 1980s, she didn't see much improvement for her gender.



**LOACKER**

"About 10 years ago, I just became totally frustrated with the lack of progress women

were making with the law," she said. "Progress is being made at glacier speed."

Loacker, chairwoman of her firm's diversity and inclusion committee, decided if more women were running companies, they would hire more female lawyers. This became the kernel for Project W, an initiative sponsored by Davis Wright Tremaine to create a network of attorneys, investors and business executives that would try to help women and people of color build successful businesses.

Today the Project W network has more than 2,500 participants, including 50 lawyers at her firm. Loacker has a full-time staff devoted to supporting the initiative, which will launch a tech equity hub for Black and Latina company founders in the summer.

"I come from a position of great privilege," Loacker said. "For me, especially over these last couple of years, I've come to realize it's an imperative and obligation to give back."

— Brian Pascus

**"PROGRESS IS BEING MADE AT GLACIER SPEED"**

## DR. JENNIFER MIERES

Northwell Health

As a former cardiologist, Dr. Jennifer Mieres experienced firsthand the lack of equity in the health care system.



**MIERES**

During her research into why sex and gender disparities occurred in cardiovascular disease, she realized something odd in the trials.

"All of these criteria excluded

women, and it had to do with the fact that all of our research was based on men. Even the rat research excluded female rats," she explained.

Mieres proceeded to chair the guidelines committee at the American Heart Association to root out these biases and wrote best practices on cardiovascular imaging for women. When she was named chief diversity and inclusion officer at Northwell Health 10 years ago, she used her experience as a practitioner to guide her.

"For me, it was a personal expansion of the work I had been doing focusing on eliminating cardiovascular disparities and how we achieve health equity much more broadly," she said.

Mieres changed how race and ethnicity were collected at Northwell and overhauled its services to include documents and translators in 22 languages. This has improved the relationships between patients and providers and the cultural competency of Northwell's hundreds of physicians.

"Diversity represents the mosaic of all of the characteristics that we bring to the table," Mieres said.

She views diversity's integration into health care delivery as critical and "as important as dealing with the epidemic of chronic disease."

— Brian Pascus

## MEREDITH MOORE

Weil, Gotshal & Manges

Even though Meredith Moore is not an attorney, her presence is felt at Weil, Gotshal & Manges, a global law firm with more than 1,000 attorneys. Moore, director of global diversity, equity and inclusion, founded the Taskforce on Women's Engagement and Retention in 2014 to promote



**MOORE**

gender parity—and the participation of women at the firm has increased 90% in five years, she said.

Then Moore introduced the Upstander initiative, an interactive training program featuring workshops for lawyers. The aim is to broaden the understanding of race, identity, prejudice and implicit bias.

"What would an upstander do? We always inject that question into everything we do," Moore said. "It's about looking into educating yourself to be more aware of dynamics around race in broader society."

Moore has overseen 10 years of mandatory diversity and inclusion training for attorneys at the firm.

"The expectation is that you regularly build on and reaffirm your commitment as a professional working at Weil," she said.

The numbers bear out Moore's impact in transforming Weil into a more diverse firm. Six years ago 21% of the partners were women; that number is 29% today. People of color made up 9% of firm employees in 2015; today that number is 15%. Since 2015, 45% of promotions have gone to women and nearly 25% to people of color.

"We really started focusing more on advancement," Moore said. "We'll be able to do our best work and deliver for our clients the more we broaden the conception of what it means to be diverse."

— Brian Pascus

## AVONIA RICHARDSON-MILLER

Hackensack Meridian Health

When Avonia Richardson-Miller explains how she's made such an impact in the diversity, equity and inclusion sector at New Jersey's largest health care provider, she looks back on what she learned growing up on a farm in North Carolina.



**MILLER**

"When you're on a farm and you're harvesting and racking your crops, you put forth all that effort to get your end results. And at the end of the day, it's about those results," she said. "If you put forth all that effort and yield no crop, that's not a good thing."

Richardson-Miller's nine years of work at Hackensack Meridian Health—she is currently vice president for diversity and inclusion—has yielded important results in a flourishing sector. Her DEI strategic plan for the hospital network has included making sure nine hospitals have achieved the Healthcare Equality Index designation and growing six team member resource groups to include women, veterans, LGBTQ+ staff, young professionals and those from multicultural backgrounds.

At her core, Richardson-Miller recognizes that everyone receives a helping hand at some point, and DEI can be used to share equal opportunities in a competitive world.

"I'm a person who values opportunities that help uplift others," she said. "It's not about my own successes. It's about bringing others along the way."

— Brian Pascus

**"IT'S NOT ABOUT MY OWN SUCCESSES. IT'S ABOUT BRINGING OTHERS ALONG THE WAY"**



## Board Heroes This award recognizes individuals who serve on boards and use their position to drive diversity initiatives within their organizations

### NYC's Top Employers for Diversity List

**1812**

THE YEAR THE OLDEST company on the list, Citigroup, was founded

**15**

NUMBER OF companies on the list

**1M**

NUMBER OF employees working for companies on the list

### NUMBER OF COMPANIES ON LIST BY INDUSTRY

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES    | 3 |
| DRUGS & BIOTECHNOLOGY             | 2 |
| HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL               | 2 |
| INSURANCE                         | 2 |
| PROFESSIONAL SERVICES             | 2 |
| CLOTHING, SHOES, SPORTS EQUIPMENT | 1 |
| MEDIA                             | 1 |
| MEDIA & ADVERTISING               | 1 |
| TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS      | 1 |

SOURCE: Forbes

### DARCY STACOM AND BERNARD WARREN

Real Estate Board of New York

Together, Darcy Stacom and Bernard Warren are leveraging their positions on the Real Estate Board of New



STACOM



WARREN

York's board of governors to build a pipeline for diverse talent.

Stacom, chairman and head of New York City capital markets for CBRE, and Warren, president of brokerage firm Webb & Brooker, became co-directors of REBNY's diversity committee in 2018. Under their leadership, in 2019 the association launched a paid summer internship program with Ladder for Leaders, an initiative of the city's Department of Youth and Community Development, that placed more than 50 young adults at leading real estate companies.

The pandemic forced Stacom and Warren to reimagine the program the following summer, and they succeeded in launching a paid virtual internship in commercial real estate for 100 diverse City University of New York students.

Stacom recalled one standout intern from last summer's Ladder for Leaders program who wanted to focus on affordable housing because she had grown up in an affordable housing unit. Stacom connected her with Goldman Sachs' Urban Investment Group, which offered the intern a job.

Their efforts have not stopped at recruitment. Stacom and Warren co-launched a six-month fellowship for rising industry leaders, in partnership with CORO Leadership New York, that seeks to retain and develop the diverse talent already making a career in real estate.

"Building a more inclusive real estate industry starts with strong leadership today," Warren said. "Our collective commitment to setting clear goals and creating strong pathways to achieve them will help the industry to recruit, retain and elevate its next generation of diverse talent."

- Maya Kaufman

### OLIVER B. LIBBY

The Resolution Project

A venture capitalist in two different and unusual ways, Oliver B.



LIBBY

Libby heads a very much for-profit business as well as a nonprofit.

The former is what Libby believes is a new kind of venture firm, one dedicated to building high-growth businesses that protect and promote people and the planet, with a strong preference for diverse leaders. It does that by being involved with each portfolio company on a daily basis. Libby is on the board of many of these companies.

Libby is also chairman of the board of The Resolution Project, a nonprofit he co-founded in 2007. Resolution identifies undergraduate students who wish to launch social ventures and provides fellowship grants and hands-on mentorship, helping them to become socially responsible leaders.

He says hundreds of Resolution fellows are working on diverse ventures in high-impact fields and benefiting over 2.5 million people across the United States and around the world.

- Evan Cooper

**HUNDREDS OF RESOLUTION FELLOWS ARE WORKING ON DIVERSE VENTURES**

### JACLYN TACORONTE

Minority and Women's Business Association of Staten Island

When Jaclyn Tacoronte, president and CEO of marketing and public relations firm JMT Media, applied in 2017 to



TACORONTE

get the company certified as a minority- and/or women-owned business enterprise, she spent months undergoing an intense vetting process.

Then she was denied.

The city at the time did not include Native Americans in its definition of minority groups, automatically excluding Tacoronte. She teamed up with Staten Island Councilwoman Debi Rose and got the city to include Native Americans as a minority in 2019, paving the way for others like her to bid on city contracts.

"I want to make sure people in my community have a seat at the table in order to make policy changes, to bring in new contracts and to simply put food on the table," Tacoronte said.

She has continued her advocacy throughout the pandemic as a founding board member of the Minority Women in Business Association of Staten Island. The organization's goal is to provide information, training and workshops to help its members obtain a MWBE certification and government contracts.

Tacoronte can draw from her own success. Her firm, which specializes in marketing for small businesses and nonprofits, is finally a New York-certified MWBE.

- Maya Kaufman

**"I WANT TO MAKE SURE PEOPLE IN MY COMMUNITY HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE"**

### ELIZABETH VELEZ

New York Building Congress

Elizabeth Velez is building a more equitable and inclusive New York in more ways than one. As both



VELEZ

an industry executive and chairwoman of the New York Building Congress, she uses her influence to champion diversity, both in employ-

ment and procurement.

Velez, president and chief contract officer of her family's construction firm, the Velez Organization, gained an even more powerful perch last year, when she was selected to lead the New York Building Congress. She is the first person of color and only the second woman to hold the seat in the association's 100-year history. Within the Building Congress, Velez helped lead its first equity and inclusion task force to develop a plan for promoting racial equity and justice in the design and building industry.

Her influence extends beyond the 250,000 skilled tradespeople and professionals whose organizations look to the Building Congress to represent their interests. She chairs the New York City Department of Design and Construction's inaugural diversity board and sits on the mayor's M/WBE Advisory Board and the comptroller's Advisory Council on Economic Growth Through Diversity and Inclusion.

As the head of the New York City School Construction Authority's mentor program, which assists 175 minority-owned contractors with business development and access to opportunities, she is ensuring that other advocates will follow her lead.

"I am proud to have worked in New York and around the nation to ensure the building industry reflects the rich diversity of the people it serves," she said.

So far, Velez says, her work advancing critical infrastructure work and development has resulted in more than \$20 billion worth of educational, health care, affordable housing and other large-scale projects throughout the five boroughs.

- Maya Kaufman



**Civic Heroes** This award recognizes civic leaders who have gone above and beyond promoting programs to advance diversity and inclusion

**QUENIA ABREU**

New York Women's Chamber of Commerce

For Quenia Abreu, president and CEO of the New York Women's Chamber of Commerce, empowering women to be entrepreneurs is about passing the torch forward.

Abreu, born in the Dominican Republic and raised in New York City, recalls growing up supported by "a village of strong women." They taught her that the best way to achieve gender and racial equality is the opportunity for economic empowerment.

In 2002 Abreu sought to do just that. With a group of businesswomen and community leaders, she founded the first women's chamber of commerce in the city and state. Today it boasts more than 7,000 members. It has assisted in creating more than 10,000 businesses and helped entrepreneurs access \$45 million in capital and \$65 million in procurement contracts.

As the state launched its minority- and women-owned business enterprise certification program, Abreu launched the MWBE Center and Women's Microenterprise Institute and helped more than 5,000 business owners apply for the certification.

- Shuan Sim



ABREU

**LEONARD ACHAN**

Hospital for Special Surgery

Leonard Achan is president of the Innovation Institute at the Hospital for Special Surgery and head of digital strategy at HSS, one of the nation's leaders in orthopedics and rheumatology.

In addition, Achan co-chairs its diversity, equity and inclusion council. He also co-founded Quality Reviews Inc., a digital health company that serves millions of patients a year.

His other accomplishments are equally diverse. Achan, who was trained as a nurse, is the holder of five patents—including two for a smart stuffed toy—and an honorary senior

naval professor in the Philippines. He is an alumnus and fellow of the Wharton School of Business.

Before joining the Hospital for Special Surgery, he spent 16 years at Mount Sinai, most recently as a senior vice president, where he restructured and centralized all operational access departments.

Achan is on the boards of several nonprofits, including Help USA, Adelphi University, the Federation of Organizations, Hagedorn Little Village School and the AHA Center for Health Innovation Leadership.

He has received several awards for clinical, executive and civil service leadership.

- Evan Cooper



ACHAN

**BARBARA ROBERTS**

Columbia Business School and Hofstra University

As entrepreneur-in-residence at Columbia Business School and Hofstra University, Barbara Roberts seeks to connect members of Black and brown communities in the city and Long Island with mentors to unlock opportunities for wealth equity.

Roberts can trace her history of pushing boundaries all the way back to childhood—in second grade she organized a sit-down strike so girls in her school could carry the American flag.

She continued to redefine what women and people of color could

achieve. Roberts was the first woman on the board of Dean Witter Reynolds, one of the largest stock brokerages in the country that was later acquired by Sears and eventually became part of Morgan Stanley.

Inclusivity had always seemed to be an afterthought in the various industries Roberts navigated, and she worked hard to change that. When she took over as president of stock photography company FPG International, she led a charge to produce stock photos that showcased nonwhite models, an effort that President Bill Clinton recognized with an award in 1994.

- Shuan Sim



ROBERTS

**COLLEEN MOLTER**

MWBE GovTek Connect

Colleen Molter is founder and president of QED National, an information technology consulting firm, but she wanted to do more than just be successful in this male-dominated industry. She wanted to make it a more welcoming and inclusive place for women and people of color.

In 2018 she convened MWBE GovTek Connect, a coalition of minority- and women-owned business enterprises in the IT sector, to forge collaborations with city officials.

Her work has resonated at state and city levels. She helped establish the city's Local Law 1 of 2013, which

set up participation goals with diverse businesses, and advocated for a discretionary vehicle for the city to procure from MWBEs products and services for up to \$500,000 per purchase.

But advancing inclusivity is not a matter of resolving issues now—it's also setting up the stage for future generations. That's why Molter works closely with the city's Department of Education. As chair of its career and technology education's IT commission, she helped develop a cybersecurity curriculum for students from diverse and multicultural backgrounds that could lead to a career in that sector.

- Shuan Sim



MOLTER

WE ARE HONORED TO BE AMONG THE LEADING COMPANIES RECOGNIZED IN CRAIN'S **EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION** AWARDS.

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**MICHAEL T. PUGH**  
President and CEO



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## Diversity Champions/Large Employers This award recognizes large employers that have initiatives promoting diversity in the workplace

### CONSOLIDATED EDISON

Con Ed has implemented a two-part action plan to embed diversity, equity and inclusion into its programs, policies and practices.

The first part focuses on increased hiring and advancement of historically underrepresented groups. Recruitment activities include rewriting job advertisement language to attract more female candidates, a blind résumé process and diverse interview panels.

It is also seeking candidates through community-based workforce development programs, technical high schools, the Society of Women Engineers and the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering. The efforts are working—last year 57% of company hires were people of color and 32% were women.

The second part of the plan focuses on transforming company culture, using tools such as the internally developed Playbook for Courageous Conversations, to help leaders talk about racism. What's more, the company holds town halls to build inclusive work environments.

– Deborah Nason



conEdison, inc.

### MAYER BROWN

International law firm Mayer Brown puts its diversity-and-inclusion activities front and center, assigning a firm partner to coordinate its efforts.



Responding to the racial injustice upheaval of 2020, the firm established Project Equity, a leadership team focusing on issues such as voter rights and criminal-justice reform in the communities it serves.

Another recent initiative, part of the firm's global talent development plan, provides mentoring and business development opportunities for its women and minority attorneys. It works to improve awareness of unconscious bias by stressing mindfulness when it comes to diversity goals regarding recruitment, retention and promotion. Indeed, this year 36% of associates and 16% of partners are minorities. Women make up 48% of associates and 22% of partners.

In addition, the Mayer Brown Diversity Scholars Program annually provides \$25,000 scholarships to qualified law students to improve diversity in the legal profession.

– Deborah Nason

### TURNER CONSTRUCTION

Turner Construction has taken anti-racist actions for decades. For example, since 1979 the firm has awarded more than \$30 billion in contracts to under-represented businesses owned by minorities, women, LGBTQ, disabled individuals and veterans.

Taking a companywide approach, Turner recently launched an inclusion action committee made up of diverse leaders to evaluate policies and processes to correct inequities. To support and promote an inclusive, mutually respectful and harassment-free work environment, the company has developed videos, protocols, anti-racism education and training sessions. Employee Resource Group networks represent Mosaic (Black, Hispanic, and Asian), women, veterans, young professionals, parents, Pride and interfaith employees.

To insure minority recruitment, Turner works with historically Black colleges, Out for Undergrad, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, the Society of Women Engineers and the National Society of Black Engineers.

Employees are assigned a mentor to ensure they receive training, coaching and advancement opportunities.

– Deborah Nason



### VIACOMCBS

ViacomCBS believes that superior programming depends on a corporate culture that reflects and honors the diversity of its audiences and communities worldwide.

To bolster this mission, the company recruits and mentors diverse talent by working with organizations such as the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the National Association of Black Journalists, GLAAD (formerly the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) and the National Association for Multi-ethnicity in Communications.

In 2020 CBS announced a 40% diversity goal in its writers' rooms for the 2021-22 season and at least 50% diversity for contestants on future unscripted programs. Among other initiatives, CBS News launched CBS Village, a multiplatform franchise to showcase reporting on issues affecting underrepresented communities.

In the past two years, ViacomCBS launched its Inclusion Week, a global initiative featuring thought leaders, talent and influencers who facilitated discussions on topics such as Black Lives

Matter, anti-racism and anti-Semitism. In 2020 more than 20,000 employees participated in the initiative.

– Deborah Nason



### WEILL CORNELL MEDICINE

Weill Cornell Medicine has established numerous programs over the years to assist individuals to join and thrive in the health care workforce.

For example, the Travelers Summer Research Fellowship trains underserved undergraduates to help them gain acceptance to medical school. Since 1969, more than 1,200 have participated, with 83% entering medical school. Other programs include the



Health Professions Recruitment and Exposure Program, which enables underrepresented student groups to learn from health care professionals, and the Black and Latino Men in Medicine Initiative, to advance its Black and Latino male faculty, trainees and students.

Weill's institutionally focused diversity initiatives include the Office of Institution Equity, which independently develops and delivers training, provides oversight to ensure equitable fair employment practices, and investigates instances of bias or discrimination. Similarly at the Weill Cornell Graduate School, the Social Justice and Anti-Racism Task Force promotes the success and proportional representation of researchers and clinicians from underrepresented communities.

– Deborah Nason

## Diversity Champions/Medium Employers This award recognizes medium employers that have initiatives promoting diversity in the workplace

### JENNER & BLOCK

Law firm Jenner & Block's commitment to diversity starts at the top, with people of color, women and LGBTQ partners serving on its policy and management committees and leading key practice groups.

Attorney promotions also reflect this commitment, as their three most recent partner classes averaged 48% female, 37% people of color and 4% openly LGBTQ.

A recent internal initiative is a sponsorship program pairing every Black lawyer at the firm with a sponsor on the management or policy committee. The program requires accountability via a written plan and periodic progress reports.

Jenner & Block offers affinity groups serving the following interests: Asian, African American, caregivers, Hispanic, LGBTQ, Muslim, multicultural, veteran and military families, and women. In addition, firmwide diversity activities include an inclusive leadership training program, which teaches how and why to promote inclusion. To date, more than 83% of the firm's lawyers and professional staff have participated in the program.

– Deborah Nason



### LIVEINTENT

LiveIntent, a marketing technology platform, believes that learning from others positively influences company culture.

Reflecting this mindset is its employee-led group called BID With Intent (Belonging, Inclusion and Diversity), founded in 2019. The group meets monthly to discuss topics such as diversity, meritocracy, equal pay and hiring practices.



The BID initiative also has spawned several employee resource groups serving categories of employees who are women, Black, LGBTQ+ and working parents. A fifth group focuses on "neurodiversity," aiming to normalize neurological differences, eliminate stigmas, and support employees who have family and community members who have conditions such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

In recruitment efforts, LiveIntent seeks people who add to the company culture. The company highlights what it calls "true" minimum requirements, eliminating the "nice-to-haves." As of January 2020, 32% of its hires were underrepresented minorities and 50% of its hires were female.

– Deborah Nason

### PER SCHOLAS

Diversity is baked into Per Scholas' mission, as the nonprofit provides technology training for underrepresented groups to build a more diverse technical workforce.

Since its founding 25 years ago, the organization has trained more than 13,000 women, people of color and veterans. Reflecting its students, the staff includes 72% people of color and 55% women.

A 3-year-old internal initiative, Inclusion by Intention, is a quarterly staff-driven conversation series for employees to discuss how race and gender affects them in the workplace. It also allows them to identify and disrupt potentially biased mindsets, behaviors and practices. Discussion topics touch on subjects such as implicit bias and microaggressions.



In 2016 Per Scholas launched an external initiative, Diverse by Design, to discuss and share best practices to attract, retain and develop skilled Black and brown professionals. In five years, more than 1,000 professionals, hiring managers and C-suite executives have participated in the initiative.

– Deborah Nason

### SHAWMUT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

For Shawmut Design and Construction, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging is a business imperative.

In 2014 the firm created a diversity leadership council to improve promotion, mentorship and managerial systems and to use data to establish accountability.

The company engaged a law firm to review all compensation elements to identify and rectify areas of inequality.

Shawmut focuses on eliminating unconscious bias in recruiting. One result: Participants in the firm's construction management skills training program for recent college graduates are 46% women and 20% people of color.

Talent development includes a mentorship program that uses a third-party algorithm to assess goals and experience to make the best matches, eliminating the potential for unconscious bias in matching.

A sponsorship program pairs high-potential, underrepresented employees with executive sponsors, aiming toward promotion to the leadership team. The first round of sponsorships resulted in 50% of the employees being promoted.

– Deborah Nason



### UNITED NATIONS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Serving members across 200 countries and territories, the United Nations Federal Credit Union embraces diversity as one of its core values.

UNFCU's diversity-focused retention initiatives include Evolve, a mentoring program launched in 2018, and Accelerate, a development platform established in 2020 for high-potential employees. Evolve's participants have been 65% female and 65% people of color; those of Accelerate included 58% women and 82% people of color.

The credit union embeds diversity and inclusion into its vendor management process, developing procedures to guide internal stakeholders on engaging minority- and women-owned suppliers.

Three business resource groups (LGBTQ+, multicultural and women) work to cultivate a culture of inclusion. They host celebrations that honor the diversity of the employee population, in addition to a series that sheds light on the difficulties faced by minority groups.



These activities have increased staff engagement across the globe by approximately 50%.

– Deborah Nason

# Diversity Champions/Small Employers This award recognizes small employers that have initiatives promoting diversity in the workplace

## BASIS INVESTMENT GROUP

Founded in 2009, Basis Investment Group is a commercial real estate investment platform and a certified minority- and/or woman-owned business enterprise.

The firm, recognizing the high barriers to enter its field, has invested and lent more than \$800 million to MWBE commercial real estate borrowers—developers and property owners—since 2010. Furthermore, 50% of Basis' third-party vendors are either minority- or women-owned or both.



With an interest in giving back to the community and developing a pipeline of women and minorities in commercial real estate, Basis established the Basis Impact Group Foundation in 2017. It runs a two-week summer program, held at nine colleges, that introduces minority high school students to a career in commercial real estate through classes and meetings with business leaders and college faculty.

In the past four years, more than 600 young people have participated.  
— Deborah Nason

## CARVER FEDERAL SAVINGS BANK

Headquartered in Harlem, Carver Federal Savings Bank, founded in 1948, is one of the largest Black-owned minority depository institutions in the United States.

Carver, with more than \$155 million in financing, is designated as a community development financial institution. It provides access to competitively priced banking products regardless of customer income.

The bank reinvests about 80 cents of every dollar deposited into its service area. In the past two years, some 74% of its loans were made to low- to moderate-income communities, with about \$23 million in loans going to minority and women entrepreneurs.

Carver's board of directors includes 100% people of color and 30% women. The bank pays more than 78% of its employees' medical benefit premiums, a significant incentive for women and minority employees.  
— Deborah Nason



## FLUSHING TOWN HALL

Founded in 1979, Flushing Town Hall is a multidisciplinary performing arts and education venue in Queens.

The nonprofit features local, immigrant, national and international artists, with an increasing emphasis on artists from the African, Afro-Latin, African American and Native American communities. The programs serve more than 21,000 school students annually.



The staff includes international teaching artists, diverse administrators and a dedicated community outreach team for different cultural groups. A diversity, equity and inclusion plan, adopted in 2019, added two new Black and Latina board members, promoted several staff members of color, increased multilingual marketing, and held anti-racism and disability inclusion training sessions.

The organization also removed exclusionary language and requirements from job descriptions.  
— Deborah Nason

— Deborah Nason

## HOLWELL SHUSTER & GOLDBERG

Guided by its diversity and inclusion committee, law firm Holwell Shuster & Goldberg has taken substantial steps to advance diversity externally and internally.



The firm has done extensive pro bono work, such as bringing litigation to address allegations of discriminatory police conduct in predominantly Black communities. It has also worked to assert the rights of detained immigrants.

Holwell Shuster & Goldberg has pledged to contribute at least \$250,000 over three years to anti-racist initiatives, including more than \$150,000 in donations to the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

The firm recruits diverse talent by investing in pipeline programs, including the city bar association's Thurgood Marshall summer law internship for high school students. It participates in affinity group conventions and career fairs.  
— Deborah Nason

— Deborah Nason

## SOURCECODE COMMUNICATIONS

In response to the pandemic, public relations firm SourceCode Communications created two groups to support underrepresented entrepreneurs and PR professionals who are mothers.

In 2020 the firm joined with venture capital fund Harlem Capital Partners and other agencies to co-found the Diversity Marketing Consortium. The group is providing \$3 million worth of marketing services to women and minority entrepreneurs for two years. More than 30 companies are in the process of onboarding.

In March SourceCode founded WeRaise PR to employ public relations practitioners who are working mothers. The firm offers several tiers of employment with increasing levels of support, ranging from 15 hours per week with no benefits to a full-time option with a child care stipend, health insurance options, unlimited paid time off and 401(k) eligibility, and six months of paid parental leave.  
— Deborah Nason

— Deborah Nason



# Leading by Example

## Reflecting the Full Spectrum of New York City



Photo credit: Project Destined

With the help of leaders like our Diversity Committee Co-Chairs Darcy Stacom and Bernard Warren, REBNY will continue to strive for a more prosperous City for all New Yorkers.

### WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- Building a Pipeline of Diverse Talent
- Cultivating the Careers of Diverse Professionals
- Building On-Ramps for Economic Opportunity at All Levels
- Minimizing Barriers Through Strategic Partnerships and Policy Advocacy



## CONGRATULATIONS Darcy Stacom & Bernard Warren

on being recognized as Board Heroes in Crain's NY's first annual Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Awards.

## POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Softw Apps Engineer needed by Oath Holdings Inc. in New York, NY. Design, dev, modify, implement, &/or test software for company products. To apply, email resume to [immigration@verizon-media.com](mailto:immigration@verizon-media.com). Refer Job#LALINC.

## PUBLIC & LEGAL NOTICES

ROADRUNNERS ENTERTAINMENT LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 05/05/21. Office: New York County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, c/o Entertainment, P.O. Box 910, Westbury, NY 11590. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

FELICE HUDSON, LLC, Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 05/28/2021. Office loc: NY County. SSNY has been designated as agent upon whom process against the LLC may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: SA Hospitality Group LLC, 950 Third Avenue-Suite 500, NY, NY 10022. Purpose: Any Lawful Purpose.

Notice of Formation of SRJ Beauty, LLC. Arts of Org filed with Secy. Of State of NY (SSNY) on 3/11/21. Office location: NY County. SSNY designated as agent upon whom process may be served and shall mail copy of process against LLC to 1 River Place, Apt # 1121, New York, NY 10036. Purpose: any lawful act.

REXUAN Properties New York LLC filed w/ SSNY on 4/23/21. Office: New York Co. SSNY designated as agent for process & shall mail to: 40 W 116th St., #A712, NY, NY 10026. Purpose: any lawful.

## PUBLIC & LEGAL NOTICES

Notice of Formation of ROSS VALLEY VENTURES, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 03/16/21. Office location: NY County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: Philip R. Rupprecht, Frazer Ryan Goldberg & Arnold, 1850 N. Central Ave., #1800, Phoenix, AZ 85004-4561. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Folium Ware LLC. Articles Of Organization filed with Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 03/12/21. Office: New York County. SSNY has been designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of process to the LLC, 118W 123rd St Apt 31, New York, NY 10027. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF KOHOKUKU LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 02/01/2021. Office location: NEW YORK County. SSNY has been designated as agent upon whom process against it may be served. The Post Office address to which the SSNY shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him/her is: 5501 JUNCTION BLVD ELMHURST, NY 11373. The principal business address of the LLC is: 709 9TH AVE NEW YORK NY 10019. Purpose: any lawful act or activity

Notice of Formation of KAMSKY CAPITAL PARTNERS, LLC Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 04/13/21. Office location: NY County. Princ. office of LLC: 563 Park Ave., NY, NY 10065. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Michael Kamsky at the princ. office of the LLC. Purpose: Securities brokerage and related services.

Notice of Formation of Krieger Capital, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 02/24/21. Office location: NY County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: Robert Krieger, 228 East 45th St., 5th Fl., NY, NY 10017. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Notice of Formation of KMH WORKS LLC Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/25/21. Office location: NY County. Princ. office of LLC: 79 Laight St., #6D, NY, NY 10013. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to the LLC at the addr. of its princ. office. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Notice of Formation of LCT3, LLC Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/21/21. Office location: NY County. Princ. office of LLC: Tyler Haydell, 9 W. 31st St., Apt. 36F, NY, NY 10001. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to the LLC at the addr. of its princ. office. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Notice of Formation of GRCC 107th Street LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 04/02/21. Office location: NY County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: c/o Goddard Riverside Community Center, 593 Columbus Ave., NY, NY 10024. Purpose: any lawful activities.

DFI Services LLC, Arts of Org. filed SSNY 03/12/21. Office: NY Co. SSNY designated agent of LLC upon whom process may be served & mail to National Registered Agents, Inc., 28 Liberty St., NY, NY 10005, also the registered agent upon whom process may be served. General Purpose.

SJD, LLC Auth. filed w/ SSNY on 5/17/21. NYS fictitious name: SJD NY LLC. Office: New York Co. LLC formed in DE on 3/26/18. SSNY designated as agent for process & shall mail to: 1407 Broadway, #3507, NY, NY 10018. DE addr. of LLC: 16192 Coastal Highway, Lewes, DE 19958. Cert. of Form. filed w/ DE Sec of State, 401 Federal St, #4, Dover, DE 19901. Purpose: any lawful.

Notice of Formation of LOKI HOSPITALITY LLC Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/11/21. Office location: NY County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Manuel Cocco, 1275 Valley Brook Ave., Lyndhurst, NJ 07071. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF THREE BEARS CAPITAL, LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/25/2021. Office location: NEW YORK County. Principal office of LLC: 380 LENOX AVE., APT #10E, NEW YORK NY, 10027. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of any process against LLC to address of its principal office. Purpose: any lawful act or activity

Notice Of Formation Of OUR FIRST LABOR AND DELIVERY SERVICES LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 03/22/2021. Office Location NEW YORK County. SSNY has been designated as agent upon whom process against it may be served. The post Office address to Which the SSNY shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him/her is: 641 LEXINGTON AVE 13TH FLOOR NY, NY 10022. The principal business address of the LLC is: 641 LEXINGTON AVE 13TH FLOOR NY, NY, 10022. Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

GH Venture Partners, LLC filed Arts. of Org. with the Sect'y of State of NY (SSNY) on 6/8/2021. Office: NY County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served and shall mail process to: The LLC, 410 Park Ave, Ste 730, NY, NY 10022. Purpose: any lawful act.

Notice of formation of Metosis Studios LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 02/01/2021. Office location: Bronx County. SSNY is designated for services of process. SSNY shall mail a copy of any process served against the LLC to 2804 Gateway Oaks Dr # 100 Sacramento, CA 95833. Purpose: any lawful purpose

FORIGRIS LLC, Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 03/01/2021. Office loc: NY County. SSNY has been designated as agent upon whom process against the LLC may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, 1 Columbus Place, Apt N40D, NY, NY 10019. Reg Agent: U.S. Corp. Agents, Inc. 7014 13th Ave., Ste 202, Brooklyn, NY 11228. Purpose: Any Lawful Purpose.

NOTICE FOR FORMATION of a limited liability company (LLC). The name of the limited liability company is NTT PROPERTIES LLC. The date of filing of the articles of organization with the Department of State was April 14, 2021. The County in New York in which the office of the company is located is New York. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the company upon whom process may be served, and the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the company served upon him or her to The LLC, 182 2nd Avenue, Apt 2, New York, New York 10003. The business purpose of the company is to engage in any and all business activities permitted under the laws of the State of New York.

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# Building a Network with Pride

THURSDAY, JUNE 24 | 4 – 5 P.M.

The LGBTQ+ community can face a wide range of inequality in the workplace, including harassment, an inability to advance, and fear to express their true selves resulting in poor job satisfaction and quality of life.

Join Crain's to celebrate this year's list of notable LGBTQ+ Leaders and Executives.

The event will open with a keynote address from Maeve DuVally, a communications executive at Goldman Sachs, who will walk us through her inspiring gender transition journey and address the reactions and challenges of her co-workers and professional associates.

This event also provides the opportunity to network, celebrate the nominees and be inspired with ideas to build a better community overall.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER



**Maeve DuVally**  
Managing Director,  
Corporate Communications,  
Goldman Sachs

**Moderator:** Fred P. Gabriel,  
Publisher/ Executive Editor,  
Crain's New York Business

**RESERVE YOUR SPACE TODAY: [CrainsNewYork.com/NetworkWithPride](https://CrainsNewYork.com/NetworkWithPride)**

**For event questions:** Ana Jimenez | [crainsevents@crainsnewyork.com](mailto:crainsevents@crainsnewyork.com)

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# PIER A

FROM PAGE 4

appreciate the spot, business has not always been booming. In 2018 the restaurateurs renegotiated their 2011 lease, with the hospitality group to pay 7% of gross sales with a minimum of \$1 million a year.

But after being ordered to close in March 2020, the operators were not able to pivot to delivery or products, as some other small restaurants in residential neighborhoods had. In April 2020 they told the landlord and a group that had lent them \$16.5 million that they would not be able to reopen, according to a letter by Pier A Battery Park Associates' lawyer, Joshua Bernstein at Akerman.

But although the landlord, the Battery Park City Authority, was amenable to ending the lease, set to expire in 2038, the lender was not. In December the lender sued the hospitality group claiming fraud, alleging that it never intended to repay a \$16.5 million loan that allowed it to build out Pier A into this ambitious spot.

The lender is a group called the New York City East River Waterfront Development Fund, which raises foreign investment for real estate projects under the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program. According to documents in the lawsuit, the group is not interested in taking control of the space.

## Harbor view

The arrival of a restaurant at Pier A was the result of at least 20 years

of debate.

In the early 2000s the New York City Economic Development Corp. controlled the site, which was leased to a tenant that promised to develop the pier but never did.

In the wake of 9/11, the National Parks Service began screening visitors to the Statue of Liberty in tents near the Castle Clinton National Monument. In 2003 the service studied the Pier A location as a place to move the temporary security operation, but it ended up remaining where it was, representative Jerry Willis said.

Other operators looked at it, but the city wanted to offer only a 10-year lease to a tenant, who would be expected to foot the bill for a \$30 million to \$40 million rehabilitation. When no one took that deal, the city allocated \$30 million to the Battery Park City Authority to become the pier's developer.

The authority repaired the shell of the building and looked for a tenant, who would need to raise money to fix up the interior and build it out. Several bidders vied for the space, including the Italian-American Association, which envisioned a cultural center and museum to celebrate Italian heritage in New York City, complete with a Ferrari at the entrance and an ode to Italian immigrants who came through Ellis Island.

The Poulakakos team eventually got the lease.

Superstorm Sandy flooded the site, complicating its construction project, but Pier A Harbor House and the other spaces eventually opened in 2014, three years after



JOE MABEL

signing the lease on the building.

## Ship shape

What's different in the debate today is that Pier A is in good shape, thanks to the sunk costs of the city and the restaurant group.

Turning the site into a security center would not be complicated, said Mike Burke, chief operating officer of concessions and park services for Hornblower Group, which

runs the ferries to Liberty and Ellis islands. Burke said a barge could be added to the end of the pier so that visitors could walk over gangways to load onto the ferry. Inside, there would be infrastructure, including elevators and bathrooms, so that tourists would have a comfortable place to have their tickets scanned, have their bags checked and wait to board.

A new use for Pier A is not the

only change the Battery will see in coming years. The city will likely need to add a seawall to protect the area against future flooding and replace the 80-year-old lower promenade.

"Change for the better" is Price's mantra, even slow change. "To have 25 acres at the tip, as the Hudson River and East River spill together in this deep harbor ... I need to defend it," she said. ■

# JOBS

FROM PAGE 1

time. Total jobs still lag their prepandemic peak of 4.7 million by about half a million. The May jobs numbers show the city adding positions more quickly than the rest of the country, as it catches up to a nationwide recovery that began earlier in other states.

The city's unemployment rate fell to 10.9%, down from 11.4% in April. The national unemployment rate is 5.5%.

The unemployment rate is a lagging indicator, said Elena Volovelsky, an economist at the state Department of Labor who analyzes the New York City region.

More than half of the new jobs were in the leisure and hospitality sectors, including entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services. Despite jumping 21% since April, there were still only 273,100 jobs in the sector in May—two-thirds of the total in February 2020.

Restaurants were the main driver, adding 11,000 jobs to accommodate the influx of people ready to go out to eat again. Because many restaurants now have steady delivery businesses and dozens of new outdoor seats, some owners say, business has increased compared with prepandemic sales.

That is not the case in commercial areas of the city, where the recovery has been less robust. Hotels

are another weak spot, so far at least. Occupancy citywide is at 40%, Rich Maroko, president of the Hotel Trades Council, said in a speech to members posted online last Wednesday. That is half of what it was in the same period in 2019.

Maroko warned members that the recovery they might be noticing as the streets fill and domestic tourists return might not translate into being called back to work anytime soon. Most hotels "are opening with limited occupancy, and many of those that are reopening are limiting amenities, most notably food and beverage," he said.

Financial-industry jobs are shrinking, meanwhile, with 2,200 fewer positions as this time last year. Although the industry remained strong throughout the pandemic, the increased ability to work remotely might have driven some positions out of New York.

A small number of finance positions could have an outside impact on city coffers. The securities industry, in particular, accounts for a fifth of private-sector wages in the city even though it makes up only 5% of its jobs, according to state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

Late last year DiNapoli cited a Siena College survey showing that 44% of high-income adults considered moving out of New York City during the pandemic.

Last week Goldman Sachs announced it would be moving 100 traders from New York to a new office in Palm Beach, Fla. ■

## REAL ESTATE

# Ex-Turner exec gets nearly four years in prison

BY EDDIE SMALL

Ronald Olson, a former Turner Construction executive who pleaded guilty to tax evasion on more than \$1.5 million worth of bribes he received from subcontractors, was sentenced last Tuesday to almost four years in prison.

Olson, former deputy operation manager and vice president at Turner Construction, was sentenced to 46 months behind bars for his role in the bribery scheme, according to Audrey Strauss, U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York. He had pleaded guilty to tax evasion in late July.

He was at Turner from 2011 to 2017, working on construction projects for Bloomberg. He and his co-conspirators—Vito Nigro, Turner construction manager; Anthony Guzzone, former Bloomberg director of global construction; and Michael Campana, Bloomberg construction manager—were accused of taking part in a scheme to get bribes from subcontractors in exchange for construction contracts and subcontracts on Bloomberg projects. The bribes came in the forms of cash, construction projects on individual homes and properties, and direct payments for personal expenses.



UMANOIDE/JUNS PLASH

For Olson, the bribes included hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of renovations at his home on Long Island and his New Jersey beach house, such as gardening, driveway work and cutting and installing marble, according to the U.S. District Attorney's Office. He also used a sham lease on his beach house, claiming that \$20,000 per month in bribes was actually rent.

## Co-conspirators

Other bribes included Guzzone receiving multiple Super Bowl tickets worth about \$8,000 each and Campana receiving money for his 2017 wedding.

Guzzone was sentenced to 38 months in prison Jan. 19 for evading taxes on more than \$1.4 million in kickbacks. Campana was sentenced to two years in prison in July for evading taxes on more than \$420,000

in kickbacks. Nigro has pleaded guilty to evading taxes on more than \$1.8 million worth of bribes he received in the scheme and is scheduled for sentencing July 1.

"Bribery and tax evasion impose hidden, unfair costs on

law-abiding customers, employers and taxpayers," Strauss said in a statement. "The type of criminality uncovered in this case undermines a just society."

Olson pleaded guilty to one count of tax evasion from 2011 through 2017. He faces three years of supervised release and needs to pay about \$662,000 in unpaid taxes and interest in addition to serving his time in prison.

Olson's attorney did not respond to a request for comment.

"The former Turner employee betrayed our company, his fellow employees and our core values of honesty and integrity," said Turner Construction spokesman Chris McFadden. "Turner has actively cooperated with law enforcement throughout the investigation and applaud[s] their efforts in prosecuting these individuals." ■



**COLLINS** acquired WWN and its archive in 2008.

BUCK ENNIS

## DAVID COLLINS

**AGE** 59

**BORN** Denver

**RESIDES** Center Moriches, Long Island

**HIS DAY JOB** Collins is managing director at Catalyst Global, an investor relations firm that he founded in 2012. It specializes in advising small-capitalization companies. He has worked in the field for more than 30 years.

**BROTHERLY LOVE** Collins discovered *Weekly World News* in college and had a subscription delivered to his brother's office at investment bank Wertheim Schroeder. "That's what brothers do," Collins said, "create a little embarrassment every week."

**BIGFOOT: INFLUENCER** Howard Stern and Seth Meyers cite WWN's work on their shows. *True Stories*, a 1986 movie starring David Byrne, was based on its articles, but Collins said Byrne didn't admit that for years.

# Bringing Bat Boy back to life

Investor relations exec revives *Weekly World News* in all its smudgy-ink glory

BY AARON ELSTEIN

Supermarket shoppers used to have a choice at the checkout line. They could buy the *National Enquirer*, which was known for embellishing stories about celebrities and politicians but kept a pinkie toe in the realm of news. Or they could read *Weekly World News*, home of headlines like "I was Bigfoot's love slave."

WWN, the first mover in fake news, reached an audience of 1.2 million in its prime, as much as *The New York Times*. It featured a recurring cast of characters, including columnist Ed Anger, a conservative who had problems with immigrants, speed limits and women. There was love advice in "Hi, Dolly," financial news in "Monkey Business" and regular features about the half-bat, half-boy called Bat Boy.

"The brand makes me laugh in a joyous way," said David Collins, an investor relations executive. "No

one gets hurt by this humor. We all could use more of that."

Collins, who acquired WWN and its archive in 2008, in March published the tabloid's first print edition since 2007. The issue contains new material and a greatest-hits collection of covers and gags at a \$20 cover price.

The recent relaunch of the *Village Voice* suggests there's money to be extracted from once-mighty print brands. Collins is well-positioned to stoke WWN's revival after 30 years of selling stories to Wall Street investment pros. His investor-relations clients have included Marvel Entertainment, the corporate superhero that turns legacy media content into streaming-era gold.

Collins has teamed up with veteran Los Angeles TV writer Greg D'Alessandro to sell Hollywood on WWN. A long shot, maybe, but the Netflixes of the world have insatiable appetites for programming.

And headlines cooked up by WWN almost 20 years ago—"Did Scots sell the Loch Ness Monster to Donald Trump?"—sound like something a cable talk show host would say to spice up a slow news day.

He isn't the first to see the potential in WWN. A musical about Bat Boy closed off-Broadway shortly after 9/11, though it's performed in schools. His team is putting together a musical film, *Zombie Wedding*, in which WWN reporters cover a ceremony where the bride is human, the groom a zombie, and both sets of parents worry about mixed marriage. Collins said the producers of *Sharknado* have shown interest in co-producing a WWN series—if he can raise half the money.

Maybe Collins won't have to raise much considering the paper was, and is again, printed with smudgy black ink on cheap white newsprint.

"The beauty of the brand," he said, "is production values need not apply." ■

"THE BRAND  
MAKES ME  
LAUGH IN A  
JOYOUS WAY. NO  
ONE GETS HURT  
BY THIS HUMOR.  
WE ALL COULD  
USE MORE OF  
THAT"

**17 City Blocks - funds 3,125 meals**

Michele & Marty Cohen

**7 City Blocks - funds 1,250 meals**

Albert Behler

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Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

**4 City Blocks - funds 750 meals**

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Arsenal Capital Partners

Becker, Glynn, Muffly, Chassin & Hosinski LLP

Deloitte & Touche LLP

First American Title Insurance Company,  
National Commercial Services

Icon Interiors

New York Land Services

Northern Trust

Harriet & Eric Rothfeld

Bette & Richard Saltzman

Wendy & Stephen B. Siegel

Tri-Star Construction

VVA Project & Cost Managers

**2 City Blocks - funds 375 meals**

Architectural Flooring Resource, Inc.

Boston Properties

The Epperson Group; Rockefeller Capital Management

Gannon Vitolo Contracting LLC

Alexandra Glickman, Gallagher Real Estate  
and Hospitality Services

Global BMU LLC

Jaros, Baum & Bolles

Jeffrey Katz & Beth Rogers

JLL

J.T. Magen & Company

Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF)

Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP

Wells Fargo

**1 City Block - funds over 185 meals**

Alston & Bird

Anonymous (2)

Joseph Azrack, Azrack & Company

Centre Street Systems, Inc.

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# CITYMEALS

ON WHEELS

**This year has been a challenging time  
for homebound elderly New Yorkers.**

**Through it all, Citymeals on Wheels has  
provided a lifeline for the city's most  
vulnerable population, delivering 4 million  
meals since the start of the pandemic.**



**Together,  
we're fighting  
elder hunger -  
block by block.**

**Through the Buy a Block campaign, the  
Paramount Group, Inc. and ARG Realty Consultants  
rallied the real estate community to raise over  
\$286,000 for Citymeals.**

**Thanks to these generous individuals and companies,  
Citymeals will hand-deliver nearly 35,700 meals for  
our frail aged neighbors.**

**To support Citymeals on Wheels,  
go to [citymeals.org/donate](https://citymeals.org/donate)**