

Individual Award

Award criteria: Nominees must be individuals who have made significant contributions toward building a sense of unity among Ohio citizens. Nominees must have used Dr. King's vision of nonviolent social change to successfully bring people from diverse backgrounds together to build a better community and advance equity.



Patricia Harris
Springdale

For over 30 years, Trish Harris has worked tirelessly as a leader within the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) and in her community by providing the training, education, platforms, and opportunities to bring people together in hopes that someday oppressed people would "not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

Throughout her career, Harris has mentored countless others and developed teams that exemplify diversity and inclusion. As Chief Operating Officer, she has led her division, which represents over half of the employees at BWC, by showing and training them to become true advocates for all BWC customers. As a leader at work and in her community, she has devoted her time to offering equal opportunities for all and for implementing training programs that establish a standard of care and inclusion that align with the vision and mission of Dr. King.

Harris implemented diversity, equity, and inclusion training for her division. Her commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion also has been illustrated at BWC by her efforts to develop a widely diverse team of claims representatives who can identify and relate to all BWC customers, employers, and partners.

She has helped implement programs that have provided a platform for those who have felt marginalized or treated unfairly to be heard. These programs work for the good of all to educate and create greater understanding. The programs continue to push BWC employees to have often difficult conversations to get to a place of clarity and compassion.

Along with other Black leaders at BWC, Harris started a blog for employees titled "The Conversation Continues" to provide employees an outlet to express their feelings and have an opportunity to have thoughtful, engaging conversations over racial inequalities. Her other involvement includes serving as executive sponsor of the Black Employee Resource Group and the Hispanic Employee Resource Group.

"Trish continues to create opportunities that foster an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together to build a better community and advance equity, aligning with the vision and mission of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," said her nominator.