



News Release

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Executive Gardner Appoints Hughes as Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer

Leadership Team to Help Set Goals, Priorities

FREDERICK, Md. – As part of her ongoing efforts to advance fairness and equity in Frederick County, County Executive Jan Gardner today announced the appointment of diversity trainer and educator Michael W. Hughes as Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer. Mr. Hughes brings decades of experience addressing issues of equity and social justice.

“I have placed a high priority on advancing equity and inclusion, both within county government and throughout our community, so that everyone has equitable opportunity to prosper,” Executive Gardner said. “I am confident Michael can move us forward. He is passionate, strategic, thoughtful, and brings a fresh perspective.”

Through his work, Mr. Hughes has fostered organizational change in areas involving race and social justice. As an administrator in higher education in North Carolina, most recently as Executive Director of Student Success and College Civility, he instituted trainings and procedures that improved student outcomes in higher education. He created more inclusive and welcoming workplaces for racially underrepresented employees, and has designed professional development courses for conferences and colleges. Courses include *Talking about Race: Yes We Can and Yes We Should*; *Developing Awareness of Your Implicit Biases*; and *Courageous Conversations about Race: Becoming Comfortable with the Uncomfortable Through Dialogue with Difference*.

Mr. Hughes earned a master’s degree in Ministry from Biblical Theological Seminary and a bachelor’s degree in Broadcast Communications from Western Kentucky University. He also holds certifications in Diversity and Intercultural Competence from Wake Forest University and as a civil rights investigator. He will begin his role as Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer on November 30.

Executive Gardner also announced the formation of an Equity Leadership Team of community members and stakeholders to help set goals and priorities in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion. The Equity Leadership Team will engage in a public process as it identifies priorities. Recommendations from the team will provide a framework for change and will serve as the foundation for an action plan.

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