

DIVERSIFYING REPRESENTATION

Increasing Black Women in Ohio Elected Office

Black women advocate for their communities and work against racial discrimination and oppression through protest politics, social movements, activism and voting. However, across the country and here, in Ohio, Black women are

extremely underrepresented as elected officials across all levels and branches of government. Ohio ranks #22 in the number of women in elected office and is even lower in the numbers of Black women elected officials. The underrepresentation of Black women in elected office limits their voices in public debates and their abilities to enact the fullness of their citizenship rights to decide their own fate and that of their communities. This further curtails the diverse perspectives required to address complex problems in a democracy.

Black women's underrepresentation in elective offices is a significant racial justice challenge that this project seeks to address by connecting civic-engaged Black women across Ohio with culturally-relevant, evidence-based political education trainings that demystify the process of running for elected office.

This project further aims to increase Black women's political participation and engagement across the state of Ohio through a grounded partnership pledged to create pathways to greater access and a nationally-recognized researcher with expertise in race, gender and politics. The initiative will increase the pool of diverse candidates in Ohio who are trained and educated on best practices for their potential campaigns.

“Black women’s underrepresentation in elective offices is a significant racial justice challenge which we seek to address by connecting civic-engaged Black women across Ohio with culturally relevant, evidence-based political education trainings that demystifies the process of running for elected office. In doing so, we deepen democratic engagement for communities of color.”

**WENDY SMOOTH, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
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