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NAAIA Welcomes Ashley White as Director, National Programs and Chief of Staff

Smith, Rogers, and Whitney join programs team



Washington, DC – The National African American Insurance Association (NAAIA) is delighted to welcome **Ashley White** as Director, National Programs and Chief of Staff, an experienced human equity executive with a demonstrated history of designing strategies that support marginalized communities in corporate environments. White replaces Kevin E. Hooks who resigned to pursue a new opportunity.

Most recently, White was Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Big Lots. Prior, White was at Target’s Corporate HQ as Senior Manager of Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Guest Relations Marketing Strategy Leader, and worked at Macy’s and Abercrombie & Fitch in supply chain, learning & development and loyalty marketing. He is a graduate of The Ohio State University and earned his MBA from Franklin University.



At NAAIA, White will lead our highly visible and growing programs portfolio, managing content development and program evaluation for our webinars, regional forums and leadership summits. He'll also be responsible for driving forward strategic partnerships and growth in line with the *Vision 2030* strategy.

"Bringing Ashley onboard strengthens our ability to meet the demand for expanded member programming and nurture relationships with key strategic partners," said Omari Aarons-Martin, NAAIA Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer. "Ashley brings a range of skill sets to help NAAIA drive progress in developing Black leaders within the insurance industry."

In addition to White, NAAIA welcomes three new additions on the programs team:

- **Akili Smith – Leadership Program Manager.** Smith joins NAAIA from the Institute for Creative Community Initiatives where he served as program manager. Prior, Smith held marketing and project management roles at Associated Black Charities and Inncuvate Consulting, LLC. He is a two-time graduate of Bowie State University with degrees in marketing and an MBA. Smith will shape and execute leadership development and membership programs, including managing NAAIA's Advancing Inclusion Series, leadership summits and regional forums.
- **Melanie Rogers – National Program Coordinator.** Most recently, Rogers was a human resources project manager for the University of Maryland Medical System and previously served roles in corporate affairs, event management, healthcare administration, and customer service. Rogers holds a Master's and Bachelor's in Business Administration from Lewis University. At NAAIA, Rogers will support the programs team through



creating seamless processes and engaging, memorable experiences that resonate with the community and advance NAAIA’s goals.

- **Zuri Whitney – Mentorship Program Manager.** Whitney brings a passion for equity in education and community development. With a Master of Science in Justice, Law, & Criminology from American University and a Bachelor of Arts from Spelman College, Whitney’s approach combines academic expertise with a dedication to social justice. She believes in leveraging data-driven strategies to dismantle systemic barriers and create equitable opportunities for all. Whitney leads development of NAAIA’s inaugural mentorship program, NAAIA NEXT.

“These additions to our team signify a bold step forward in achieving our mission of empowering professionals of color and strengthening our industry,” said Aarons–Martin, NAAIA Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer. “Ashley, Akili, Melanie, and Zuri bring a wealth of knowledge and a shared commitment to advancing NAAIA’s goals. Their leadership will undoubtedly elevate our programs and enhance the experience for our members.”

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ABOUT NAAIA

The National African American Insurance Association (NAAIA) fosters a network for professionals of color in the insurance industry, promoting professional development and personal empowerment.

With over 2,700 members across 24 chapters nationwide, NAAIA represents every industry sector and serves as a gateway to diverse talent.

For more information, visit www.naaia.org.