

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**KAELEA SHANER HIRED AS DELAWARE JUDICIARY'S FIRST DIVERSITY,
EQUITY AND INCLUSION OFFICER**

The hiring of a DEI officer completes a key recommendation from the Judiciary's Strategic Plan on improving diversity in the Delaware Bench and Bar

Kaelea Shaner has been hired as the Delaware Judiciary's first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, completing one of the key recommendations from the Delaware Supreme Court's 2022 Strategic Plan on improving diversity in the Delaware Bench and Bar.

"The Judicial Branch is thrilled to welcome Kaelea Shaner as our first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer," said Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr. "We also want to express our gratitude to the Governor and the General Assembly for recognizing the importance of this DEI position and providing funding. Kaelea will lead many of our Judicial Branch DEI initiatives going forward. Given her experience and enthusiasm for this position – and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in general – we are excited to get to work with her to make progress towards a more diverse court system and legal community."

Shaner started in her new position this week, and her office is located within the Administrative Office of the Courts, which is the administrative arm of the Delaware Supreme Court that oversees court operations statewide and carries out policies and goals established by the Chief Justice.

"I'm excited to bring my personal and professional interest in DEI to the state that is now my home," said Shaner, a Philadelphia-area native. "This is such a unique opportunity to start from the ground up and build a model of excellence for what a state court system DEI program can look like, and change the face and future of the legal practice and judicial operations here in Delaware."

Prior to joining the Delaware Judiciary, Shaner had worked as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program Manager at the Herndon, Virginia-based Strategic Education Inc., since 2019. Strategic Education Inc. is an education services company, that operates several educational institutions including Strayer University and Capella University. Prior to that role, Shaner was a Senior Student Services Coach at Strayer University from 2015-2019. Shaner is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University where she received her BA in English and Neumann University where she received her MS in Education.

As the Delaware Judiciary's first DEI Officer, Shaner will be working with the Chief Justice and State Court Administrator Gayle Lafferty to develop policies and strategies to achieve diversity, equity and inclusion goals in all Delaware Courts and among members of the Delaware Bar; work to strengthen and enhance ongoing DEI efforts in the courts; and develop new DEI training.

The Strategic Plan on improving diversity in the Delaware Bench and Bar, released in Feb. 2022, was created for the Delaware Judiciary by a steering committee from across the Delaware legal community, assisted by the National Center for State Courts and the non-profit Access Lex Institute. The plan involved more than 50 recommendations to improve diversity, starting with recommendations for increased legal education in grammar schools – to encourage more diverse students to consider studying law as a career – to pipeline programs to get more diverse candidates into law school – to changes in how Delaware administers its Bar Exam and licenses attorneys. An additional recommendation in the plan is for every one of Delaware's six courts to have their own DEI officer in addition to the DEI officer in the Administrative Office of the Courts. The full report is available on the [Delaware Judiciary's website](#).