

**Organization Name:** Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission

**Project or Program Name:** CEO Intern Fellows Program for Diverse Groups

**Goal that best reflects your Project or Program's achievements:** Provides professional growth or leadership opportunities for People of Color through our policies, projects, hiring practices, or actions

**Launch date for the Project or Program**

5/13/2014

**How many months of proven experience is this submission based upon?**

The CEO Intern Fellows Program for Diverse Groups proudly accepted our first cohort of interns in May 2014. The program is now in our seventh year of operation.

**Is this Project or Program complete? If no, when will it be completed?**

No. It is ongoing.

**Briefly describe the Project or Program**

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Intern Fellows Program for Diverse Groups is designed to introduce college juniors, seniors, and recent college graduates from underrepresented groups to careers in transportation through intern fellowships with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC). CEO Intern Fellows receive a full professional enrichment experience that includes department experiences specific to their major, participation in a group project assigned by the executive leadership and concludes with a presentation of the project to the members of the senior staff. In addition to gaining valuable work experience within the transportation industry, each year since 2014, except for 2020, the PTC has accepted a cohort of 6-10 interns to participate in the program from May 12 to August 13.

**What objective(s) was the Project or Program designed to accomplish?**

The objective of the program is to address the future workforce needs within the transportation industry specifically in the areas of STEM, along with other roles such as Human Resources, PR & Marketing, Finance & Administration, and other operational areas. By introducing underrepresented groups to positions within the PTC that are essential, their perception is reduced that the transportation industry has limited advancement opportunities. The program also increases the number of qualified transportation workers entering the workforce once they graduate from college.

**How did the Project or Program accomplish the stated objectives?**

The PTC recognizes with the changing workforce landscape within the transportation industry, we have to equip potential leaders of tomorrow with the tools to rapidly anticipate and meet technological developments, and we achieve this by addressing the needs of a diverse and inclusive workforce. Since the program's inception in 2014, 65 CEO Intern Fellows who hail from our finest Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) and regional universities and colleges have participated in the program. By providing thought-provoking departmental assignments for CEO Intern Fellows to broaden their exposure to the wide array of employment opportunities within the transportation industry, the program addresses the future workforce needs of the transportation field, specifically in the STEM areas (science, technology, engineering, and math).

### **What were the successful, demonstrable results of the Project or Program that positively affected the customer, agency and/or the community?**

Over the years, the CEO Intern Fellows have worked on projects that benefit the PTC in procedural and operational planning. The project scope is identified by the executive leadership team and is designed to provide the CEO Intern Fellows with a deeper exploration into strategic initiatives intended to benefit our customers, community, and the PTC. The following projects continue to make a sustainable impact: (2014) Operation Orange Squeeze - an annual campaign which specifically targets turnpike workers' safety in active work zones; (2015) Dashboards for Success - data based visuals that provide a visual presentation of key performance indicators specific to strategic objectives; (2016) Cashless Tolling Application – app development inclusive for the cash preferred demographic, economically feasible and compliant with the federal mandate for national interoperability; (2017) Turnpike 100 - a look forward to assess the PTC's long range plan and a review of our strategic drivers to achieve upcoming success in 2040 (PTC's 100th Anniversary); (2018) The Future is Now - identify current technology, automotive, and transportation trends, while providing innovative solutions for tolling and revenue; (2019) A Sustainable Turnpike - paving the road towards a sustainable future by reviewing the various processes within the PTC where sustainable efforts can be made to improve outcomes, i.e. salt usage, maintenance, bridges and underpasses, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4); (2021) Human Trafficking Awareness – an awareness initiative with coordinated support from external partnerships to prevent further trafficking on our roadway.

### **Is your Project or Program relevant and applicable to the overall toll industry? If so, how?**

The PTC's commitment to hire and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce lead to the establishment of the CEO Intern Fellows Program for Diverse Groups. Our program is a strategic response to the challenges that many organizations face within the toll industry to find workforce talent from underrepresented groups. By creating an internship that introduces college students to careers in transportation, the PTC can maintain a competitive advantage by introducing college students to all levels of the organization. The program serves as a pathway to develop future leaders in various positions throughout the organization, while supporting our commitment to advance diversity and inclusion within the PTC with top talent.

### **How did this Project or Program achieve or demonstrate excellence?**

The CEO Intern Fellows Program for Diverse Groups is represented through the value of Responsibility Matters - We embody diversity, integrity, and sustainability in all of our practices. Since the establishment of the program in 2014, the CEO Intern Fellows Program for Diverse Groups continues to demonstrate that our work environment thrives when we have diverse representation and ideas contributing to the success of our organization. By establishing an internship program focused on underrepresented groups, we intentionally harness the power of our value Responsibility Matters. Our program provides young leaders an enrichment experience where they can learn, excel, and cultivate their leadership skills in an organization that values their diversity and unique perspectives. The CEO Intern Fellows also challenge our own PTC employees by introducing new ways of thinking about potential solutions to business issues. This exchange of knowledge and problem solving further enhances how we do business and is essential in appreciating and respecting diverse perspectives in a global workforce.

### **Describe any innovative aspects of your Project or Program**

Our CEO Intern Fellows are developed through a three-part focused approach to their personal and professional development. (1) Each CEO Intern Fellow is placed within their respective department to gain

real world work experiences directly aligned with their major. This provides a hands-on approach to understanding the inner workings of the department in relation to their professional goals after college. (2) The Commission Wide or PTC group project provides the CEO Intern Fellows the opportunity to learn more about the various business operations within the PTC, while engaging with their project sponsors (PTC employees) and fellow interns in a professional team environment. (3) By providing professional development offerings such as full-day orientation to the PTC, team building, intercultural competency, presentation planning and communication, CEO Intern Fellows continue to build upon the skills needed to be successful working within a transportation organization. The program utilizes career readiness competencies provided by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) to further enhance our programming goals. Each CEO Intern Fellow is provided a mentor who resides outside of their respective department. The mentor offers the CEO Intern Fellow additional social engagement and a global understanding of the roles and responsibilities of those who work in other departments within the PTC. Our CEO, Mark Compton and Chief Operating Officer, Craig Shuey participate in group meetings to assess the project's progress and to deepen connections with the CEO Intern Fellows.

### **List individuals worthy of special recognition for this Project or Program**

Through the leadership commitment of our Chief Executive Officer, Mark Compton, and Founder, Myneca Y. Ojo, Director of Diversity and Inclusion. The CEO Intern Fellows Program for Diverse Groups was established to familiarize underrepresented groups to the transportation industry and to future employment opportunities within the PTC. Their foresight continues to successfully advance the PTC as an industry leader, while introducing college students to the possibility of a new career pathway in the field of transportation.