



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NON-PROFIT LEADER JOINS THE URBAN SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTORS
NETWORK (USDN) AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Deneine Christa Powell, Nonprofit Executive and Climate Solutions & Policy Advocate
Joins USDN

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) today announced that it will welcome Deneine Christa Powell as its new Executive Director on April 1, 2024. Powell will lead the organization in its mission to support local government sustainability professionals as they pursue transformative change to achieve equitable, resilient, and sustainable communities.

Powell's hiring comes as the organization begins to envision the evolution of their current strategic plan which has focused on deepening engagement with members across the network, supporting practitioners as they transform sustainability practice through experiential learning, and leveraging USDN's position for large-scale systems change. Powell is a nonprofit executive and climate solutions expert with over 20 years of nonprofit leadership and management experience in environmental conservation, policy advocacy, and community engagement.

Deneine Christa Powell was selected for the role after a national search that was stewarded by USDN staff, members from USDN's Network Advisory Committee, and USDN's Board of Directors, with support and guidance from Executive Search Partners at Diverse Talent. Deneine Christa is completing her tenure at African American Alliance of CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution) CEOs, where she worked as the Environmental and Climate Program Director. She also recently completed a year-long FUSE Corps Executive Climate and Equity Fellowship with the City of Milwaukee, WI and has held leadership roles with ecoAmerica, African American Leadership Alliance of Milwaukee, and Groundwork Milwaukee.

“USDN is at the forefront of local climate action, where communities can immediately observe and measure the impact of policies and initiatives. I am thrilled to support USDN's efforts to be at the forefront of urban sustainability and to advance equity and justice. I value USDN's collaborative environment and the impact our work will have on future generations. Ultimately, what excites me about USDN is the collective impact for all communities—improving people's lives, their places, and the planet,” said Powell.

“We are incredibly honored to announce Deneine Christa Powell as USDN’s new Executive Director,” said Jesse King, USDN Board President. “Her expertise spans the nonprofit, public and private sectors. We value her commitment to justice, equity, inclusion and diversity, her familiarity and affinity with the work of practitioners and community-based organizations in our field. We believe her knowledge in navigating the federal funding landscape, her exceptional fundraising ability, and her commitment to cultivating relationships will be an asset to our network.”

As Powell joins USDN as its new Executive Director, we also offer heartfelt appreciation to Laurene Hamilton who has served as USDN’s Interim Executive Director. “I want to pass along my sincerest thanks to all who have been so supportive during this interim period. You have helped USDN maintain consistency as we provided quality programming and engagement, thereby ensuring organizational vibrancy during our leadership transition,” said Hamilton. “I was humbled and honored to have served this amazing network as the Interim ED, and I remain committed to connecting people and fostering relationships for our sustainability practitioners as we move forward. I look forward to welcoming Deneine Christa Powell and continuing to work with the rest of the USDN team to support this amazing network.”

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About USDN

USDN is a non-profit member-led network of 300 cities, counties and districts across the US and Canada that serves nearly 3,000 sustainability practitioners. USDN works to create equitable, resilient, and sustainable communities by advancing the field of local government sustainability and equipping practitioners to be catalysts of transformative change. The network provides members with opportunities for peer learning, workshops and training, coaching, mini-grants, and connections with technical partners, and shares network insights and experience to move the field forward.