



The Equity Alliance adds staff, expands operations

Non-profit adds capacity for statewide organizing, Covid-19 response, voter engagement

For Immediate Release

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Equity Alliance, a statewide non-profit focused on the civic and economic empowerment of the Black community, announced today the addition of seven new staff members to assist the organization as it expands its operations.

The staff additions will add capacity to The Equity Alliance’s community organizing, voter outreach and Covid-19 response efforts. Charlane Oliver, co-founder and co-executive director, said the non-profit’s growth is in response to a greater need than ever before in Tennessee for organizing to address social, civic and economic inequity.

“Americans are currently engaged in the deepest national discussion about race and white supremacy in our lifetime. We’re at a critical juncture where we can’t let up on our quest for lasting policy change and liberation. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic presents unique challenges to the Black community nationally and in Tennessee. The fight for equity has never been more important, and we are laser focused on making sure civic and economic opportunities for Black Tennesseans make way for a fair and just America. The Equity Alliance is thrilled to have an incredible team to help us navigate the current crisis while showing up for everyday people,” Oliver said.

The new additions to The Equity Alliance staff are:

Tequila Johnson, Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director

Tequila Johnson is one of the nation’s leading community organizers and strategists on issues of racial equity and civic engagement for Black Americans and people of color. Johnson led the 2018 Tennessee Black Voter Project, organizing the efforts of more than a dozen non-profits to deliver 91,000 voter registration forms for Black Tennesseans. Johnson has been recognized for her work as a 2020 Roddenberry Civil Rights Fellow, the 2019 Human Rights Coalition Rising Advocate Award, and the 2019 NAACP Ella Baker Power Award. She has been featured in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* and on CNN and MSNBC. Johnson is a graduate of Tennessee State University, where she received her master’s degree in counseling psychology and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in industrial and organizational psychology. Johnson helped found The Equity Alliance in 2016, and she now joins the organization as a full-time, executive staff member.



Tori Griffin, Organizing Director

Tori Griffin brings extensive national public policy and political campaign experience to The Equity Alliance in his role as organizing director. He is a former White House intern under President Bill Clinton, and he worked on faith-based and political organizing for the presidential campaigns of Vice President Al Gore, President Barack Obama, and Senator Hillary Clinton. His national policy experience includes taxation reform, marijuana legalization and organized labor. In 2018, Griffin became a first-time candidate running for an at-large seat on the Knox County Commission. Most recently, Griffin worked as a Regional Field Organizer for the national NAACP's Environmental Justice Climate Change Program, focusing on environmental and energy issues in the South. He is a Knoxville, Tennessee native and a graduate of Morehouse College.

Tamika White, Statewide Organizer

Tamika White is a Nashville native with a background in community organizing around issues of social justice, voting rights and economic empowerment. White was a volunteer with The Equity Alliance for several years before moving to a full-time role. She assisted the organization with its Tennessee Black Voter Project, Souls to the Polls and the #CountMeInTN census awareness project. She is pursuing her bachelor's degree in business management and leadership. White also serves as a regional vice chair for the Davidson County Democratic Party.

RaCarol Woodard, Community Organizer

RaCarol Woodard is a Tennessee native and the daughter of educators with experience in campaigns and grassroots organizing. She joined The Equity Alliance staff in March to lead tornado and Covid-19 recovery response as well as the statewide rural Health Equity organizing project. Woodard previously worked as the campaign manager for District 21 Councilman Brandon Taylor and with the Tennessee Democratic Party. She is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University where she majored in political science and minored in criminal justice.

Tiffany Provenzano, Operations Manager

Tiffany Provenzano joined the organization in March and brings her marketing experience in the music industry and technology sector to The Equity Alliance, where she will add administrative support for the organization's efforts. She is an experienced volunteer for political and social justice campaigns. A native of Oklahoma, she moved to Nashville by way of Miami and Brooklyn.

Tereva Parham, Communications Consultant

Tereva is a communications and media strategist with diverse experience in public relations, broadcast and media, and internal communications for non-profit organizations, small businesses, and Fortune 500 companies. Since 2017, Tereva has held roles as a volunteer, event logistics liaison, and team lead for The Equity Alliance. In serving as the consultant Communications Manager, she will strengthen the organization's voice and manage streamlined integrated communications.



Henry Hicks, Civic Engagement Intern

A 2020 Harry S. Truman Scholar and Nashville native, Henry joins the team as a summer intern providing organizing support for the organization's civic engagement programs. Hicks is a third-year comparative American studies and creative writing double major at Oberlin College. He is a former intern for U.S. Congressman Jim Cooper and previously worked as a field organizer for the Kamala Harris For the People presidential campaign.

"Americans of every race are coming to grips with the realities of police brutality, inequality, and what being Black in America really means. Meanwhile, the Covid-19 pandemic has only widened the equity gap for Black Tennesseans," Johnson added. "The Equity Alliance is ready to meet these new challenges and fight systems of oppression in our state."

The new additions join Oliver during a time when The Equity Alliance has taken the lead on many key issues facing the state's Black community:

- The Equity Alliance was the [lead organizer for the peaceful "I Will Breathe" rally](#) at the Tennessee State Capitol on May 30 to protest the murder of Minneapolis resident George Floyd as well as to speak out against police brutality and violence against Black Americans.
- The Equity Alliance delivered an [extensive set of recommendations](#) to Mayor John Cooper for prioritizing \$121 million in federal CARES Act funding to assist COVID-19 economic recovery in the Black community. Oliver was also named to Cooper's advisory committee of business and civic leaders to help steer CARES Act spending in Metro Nashville.
- The non-profit also [filed a lawsuit](#) alongside Tennessee residents and national voting rights partners to expand absentee vote-by-mail rights to residents that wish to avoid potential Covid-19 exposure at the polls. Additionally, the lawsuit seeks to remove criminal penalties for organizations that assist voters with absentee mail ballots.
- The Equity Alliance also led tornado recovery efforts in predominantly Black North Nashville with the [#DontSellOutNorf campaign](#), bringing together attorneys, insurance professionals, and real estate brokers to advise homeowners before selling storm damaged property as well as providing direct cash relief to residents.

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About The Equity Alliance: Founded in November 2016 by six black women, the mission of The Equity Alliance is to proactively advocate for African Americans and other communities of color to have a fair and just opportunity at realizing the American dream. We are a Nashville-based 501(c)3 nonpartisan



non-profit organization that seeks to equip citizens with tools and strategies to engage in the civic process and empower them to take action on issues affecting their daily lives. Learn more at www.theequityalliance.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

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