



Ahkirah
legal & diversity consultants

RFP for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant

The City of Hendersonville, NC

Bahiyyah A. Greer
PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT

To Whom It May Concern:

AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants is pleased to submit this proposal to The City of Hendersonville, North Carolina to deliver a comprehensive strategic assessment and to develop a strategic plan to increase diversity, equity and inclusion through education, training, and outreach. We are committed to offering these services aligned to your needs, delivered in collaboration with your organization, through our team of professionals with proven experience in leadership, facilitation, and organizational strategy management. This submission outlines a summary of our ability to provide the services described in the Request for Proposals, as well as our willingness to maintain flexibility in our approach, by using a co-design model that best aligns to the needs, goals, and budget of The City of Hendersonville.

In addition to our leadership backgrounds, we are also equity specialists, trained and qualified administrators of the *Intercultural Development Inventory*® (IDI®), which assesses intercultural competence. As Qualified IDI Administrators, we are officially certified to administer the IDI as a comprehensive assessment tool to individuals and organizations, as well as to apply the IDI to our own work, both in how we demonstrate cross cultural knowledge and navigate cultural differences and in how we support communities as they advance initiatives to address equity challenges, increase cross cultural understanding, and support the accomplishment of equity goals.

We look forward to the opportunity to partner with The City of Hendersonville to deliver a comprehensive strategic assessment and to help The City advance its vision of developing a strategic plan to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion through education, training and outreach.

Most Respectfully,

Bahiyyah A. Greer
Principal Consultant
AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants
www.ahkirah.com

Who Are We?

We are AHKIRAH, LLC (dba AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants), a black-owned, woman-owned, North Carolina established, equity consulting firm formed in 2018 and mindfully serving corporations, local communities, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations throughout the United States and abroad. Our legal name and structure as a single member-managed limited liability corporation has remained the same since formation in 2018. Mrs. Bahiyyah A. Greer is the managing member of AHKIRAH, LLC. This proposal is submitted by a consulting firm. Please refer to the attached Certificate of Existence issued by the North Carolina Secretary of State as evidence of authority to conduct business within North Carolina.

Our Purpose

AHKIRAH offers engaging facilitated dialogue, programs and workshops that provide organizations and corporations with innovative and strategic approaches to increase inclusive cultural competence, advance enterprise-wide equity building, interrupt bias, and build meaningful diversity.

Our Mission

The word *ahkirah* means “afterlife” in Arabic. AHKIRAH's mission is to create and foster platforms, specific to the needs of the client partner, that are transformative. We connect the organizational *heart and mind* of our client partners through experiential workshops and participant-directed experiences. With greater understanding of ourselves and others, we become more fluid and fluent in our ability to fully recognize and appreciate the shared journey that we are all on.

Our Values

AHKIRAH's core values are summarized within our company mantras:

To Serve. ~ Our commitment to our client partner is founded within our desire to connect with and serve the entire organizational body. Every department. Every role. Every experience.

To Support. ~ Our commitment to our client partner is strengthened by our belief that by amplifying the varied lived experiences and perspectives within the organizational body, the client partner will better fulfill its own organizational mission and keep its promises.

To Sustain. ~ Our commitment to our client partner is rooted in the knowledge that transformation, like all life processes, takes time, consistency, and belief in the capacity for greatness.

Where Are We?

We hold offices in both North Carolina and Mississippi.

North Carolina (principal place of business)
AHKIRAH, LLC
626 Price Avenue
Durham, North Carolina 27701
How can you reach us?

Mississippi
AHKIRAH, LLC
4542 Village Drive
Jackson, Mississippi 39206

Our office number is 704.729.4309. Our fax number is 704.973.0199. Our email address is info@ahkirah.com. The single point of contact for this proposal is Mrs. Bahiyyah A. Greer. The person with binding authority to enter into contracts is Mrs. Bahiyyah A. Greer, and the prime contracting party for all contracts is AHKIRAH, LLC, a limited liability corporation.

Describe your interest in this project and the unique advantage your firm and team bring to the project.

There are many areas of expertise that we could highlight to underscore the unique advantages that our firm offers within this proposal. However, the passionate interest and singular perspective that we intend to bring to our work with The City of Hendersonville is best described in the words and lived experience of our Senior Consultant, Mrs. Aisha Abdul-Ali (formally Emma King).

***“In 1964, the Henderson County School District attempted a social experiment that forever changed the landscape of our community and the history of our city – public school integration. I was one of the twenty fledgling Black High School students who agreed to leave the all-Black Ninth Avenue High School, where we felt confident and supported, and integrate the all-White Hendersonville High School during my junior year.*”**

I quickly learned to dread what was to be our daily experience Monday through Friday, as I often arrived home shaking and in tears from the barrage of taunts and verbal assaults from white students demanding the “niggers go back to your own school”. We were exiled in every sense imaginable.

Why did we take that first step to integrate? For my family it was economic. We didn’t integrate Hendersonville High School because we wanted to upend established “traditions”. We simply wanted the same educational opportunities that were afforded to only certain students in the County, but shouldered by all. My family had lived in Hendersonville for generations upon generations, and was subsequently part of a tax base that furnished the all-White schools with new textbooks, more teachers, AP classes, and advanced lab equipment. Our all-Black school, also supported, albeit meagerly by the same tax base, was given outdated textbooks, had few teachers, and no advanced classes or equipment. Attending the all-White school was like landing on another planet. Literally. While my old Black classmates from Ninth Avenue High School were just beginning to study algebra, I, along with my new White classmates, were beginning our studies in aeronautics. I had never even heard of that subject before! Can you imagine? The established curriculum that taught Black high school juniors basic math was teaching White high school juniors aerodynamic and propulsion systems. So, I dug in. I studied. I studied through the exile and the assaults and the classes for which I had no remedial context. I took the PSAT in anticipation for the SAT. When the SAT testing schedule was published for all seniors, my name was absent. None of the school counselors informed me why, but after many inquiries and indignities I uncovered the truth. Not only had I scored so high on the PSAT that I was exempt from sitting for the SAT, but as a result of my score, I was offered a full academic scholarship to UNCC and a partial academic scholarship to UNC. Upon the revelation of my academic success, my academic counselor quite pointedly stated that she believed my score to be the result of being “good at guessing”, and that I was by no means college material. I chose, in the end, not to attend either university. At the tender age of eighteen I was battle-scarred and tired of fighting. Tired of fighting for acceptance. For validation. For recognition of my humanity.

Of the twenty Black juniors in our group in 1964, the majority of those students either returned back to the segregated Black high school, transferred to other schools within North Carolina, or completely dropped out of school after that first junior semester. By the time I graduated in my senior year, only five Black students were conferred degrees. That was fifty-eight years ago. I’ve since gone on to receive advanced degrees, accreditations, and more. Now, in retrospect, despite the traumas of integration, I believe a higher good was achieved. The issue of integration had to be resolved. I believe in resolution. I believe in healing. And honestly, Hendersonville deserved better. Not “Black Hendersonville” or “White Hendersonville”, but all of Hendersonville. It is my home. It is truly a wonderful place to live, and the people are the best that I have known throughout my travels and throughout my life.” (Aisha Abdul-Ali)

The information contained in this proposal or any part thereof, including any exhibits, schedules, and other documents and instruments delivered or to be delivered to the City, is true, accurate, and complete.

**Attachment: North Carolina Certificate of Existence for AHKIRAH, LLC*

PLACEHOLDER FOR NC CERTIFICATE OF EXISTENCE

TAB B

COMPANY BACKGROUND / EXPERIENCE

HISTORY AND PROFILE

We are AHKIRAH, LLC (dba AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants), a black-owned, woman-owned, North Carolina established, equity consulting firm formed in 2018 and mindfully serving corporations, local communities, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations throughout the United States and abroad. Our legal name and structure as a single member-managed limited liability corporation has remained the same since formation in 2018.

This proposal is intended to cover the full scope of work as listed within the RFP.

Services Offered

🏛️ The Strategic Assessment

AHKIRAH is fully supportive of The City of Hendersonville's interest in further enriching its diversity, equity and inclusion organizational competencies. In this spirit, we enthusiastically advise commencing with a comprehensive assessment of cultural competence for all employees, from seasonal workers to department leaders. Based upon the baseline results of this assessment, AHKIRAH will design and facilitate experiential opportunities which will enhance cultural competence and inclusive leadership within all levels of city infrastructure. In order to first establish an organizational baseline of cultural competence, AHKIRAH proposes administration of the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®) to organizational leaders on a measured basis.

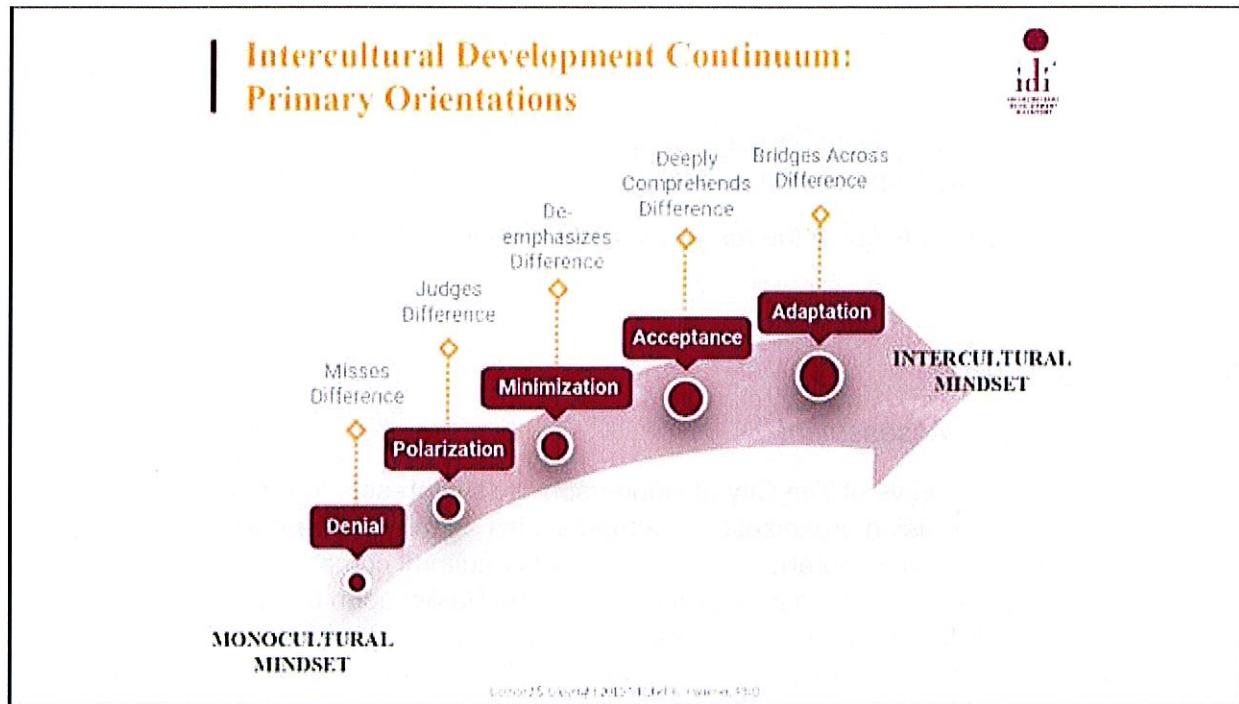
The Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®) assesses intercultural competence—the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities. Intercultural competence has been identified as a critical capability in several studies focused on high-stress professional communication, cross-functional decision making, cross-cultural business performance, cross-racial perceptions and cross-identity relations within organizations.

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is a 50-item questionnaire available online that can be completed within 15–20 minutes.

Developed by Dr. Mitchell Hammer and Dr. Milton Bennett, the IDI is a 50-item, theory-based online psychometric instrument that measures intercultural sensitivity as conceptualized in Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The DMIS is a framework for explaining the reactions of people to cultural differences. The underlying assumption of the model is that as one's experience of cultural differences becomes more complex, one's potential competence in intercultural interactions increases.

Dr. Bennett identified a set of fundamental cognitive structures (or "worldviews") that act as orientations to cultural difference. The worldviews (see diagram) vary from more monocultural to more intercultural. According to the DMIS theory, more intercultural worldviews have more potential to generate the attitudes, knowledge, and behavior that constitute organizational intercultural competence, and ultimately inclusive behaviors.

FIGURE 1: INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT WORLDVIEWS



Whereas most assessments focus on perceptions and opinions, the IDI measures the capability of city employees to *affect change related to diversity, equity and inclusion*. Assessing perceptions and attitudes is certainly an important component, however, the information gleaned from that approach alone will not reveal how competently and effectively The City addresses important barriers and gaps. The results of the IDI are predictive of how well The City of Hendersonville can achieve its aspirations of creating a more inclusive environment. The IDI will also help to determine organizational readiness and the most appropriate types of learning and development within a subsequent strategic plan.

The IDI is more than a measurement tool. It also provides guidelines on the kinds of learning interventions that most effectively and efficiently build intercultural competence. Further, there is a growing body of research that clearly demonstrates that with appropriate learning interventions based on IDI profile results, individuals and groups can greatly increase their intercultural competence and also implement that increased cross-cultural capability in ways that accomplish key organizational goals.

After administration of the IDI assessment is complete, AHKIRAH will electronically provide an individual assessment report to each employee respondent. AHKIRAH will also provide a group aggregate report which captures the comprehensive combined data of all employee respondents. This data can be analyzed along very specific and broad demographic points, depending upon client partner needs. Each report will contain detailed results and outcomes

from that employee's IDI assessment, in addition to a personalized Intercultural Development Plan (IDP).

The IDP is a customized collection of activities and reflective questions that are meant to aid in the individual development of intercultural competence. Dissemination of each employee report (by email) will be immediately followed by an individualized, one-on-one, 30-minute confidential coaching call with feedback and discussion by an AHKIRAH Consultant.

The Strategic Plan Implementation

Our ability to codesign, develop, and execute the strategic assessment and planning process makes us uniquely positioned to provide support and guidance in developing a comprehensive strategic plan for growth and improvement for The City of Hendersonville. Our expansive team of cross-functional professionals are committed to the service, support and sustainment of the organizational *heart and mind* of our clients. After we have conducted and shared the results of our comprehensive assessment, we offer a four-part cohort of services to increase diversity, equity and inclusion through **development of a comprehensive framework, education, training, and outreach.**

*Strategic Plan Implementation: **Comprehensive Framework***

To thoroughly construct a comprehensive framework for The City of Hendersonville's Strategic Plan, AHKIRAH works with city leaders to co-design the overall strategic planning process map. Through processes of information gathering, synthesis and strategic plan formation, AHKIRAH reviews pertinent city data and programs, presents relevant research and best practices, develops a readiness and needs assessment, develops a *City of Hendersonville Theory of Action* in alignment with the city's communication and marketing plan, assesses and renews the city's vision, mission and core values statements, outlines the strategy and implementation plan for a *City of Hendersonville Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee (HIDEAC)*, develops action plans and performance measures, and develop a sustainability roadmap to properly house the aforementioned objectives.

*Strategic Plan Implementation: **Education***

Executive Coaching and Exchange – “**Diversity Dialogues**”

AHKIRAH designs leader-specific content relevant to issues of:

- critical self-awareness for leaders,
- historical and contextual implications of supremacy
- attribution bias, anchoring bias and implicit bias
- cultural identity and membership
- intercultural communication and dominance
- unobstructed personal self-examination and accountability in multi-cultural environments

Within our second cohort of services, AHKIRAH presents relevant research and best practices to inform and guide the professional development of managers and organizational leaders. AHKIRAH engages in scheduled, hour-long presentations and dialogues with leaders which explores dedicated content and examines evolving social issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion. AHKIRAH engages as a thought-partner in a robust study and critical analysis of challenging social and cultural concerns.

AHKIRAH provides coaching portfolios to all leaders containing relevant videos, articles, vocabularies, referenced publications and additional tools to support the collaborative and individualized journey of each Hendersonville City manager and department head along this journey. Physical materials will be provided before each live coaching session and electronically before each virtual coaching session.









Structured Focus Groups – “**Safe Space Sessions**”



We believe education is fluid, and therefore moves throughout organizations from many directions. Oftentimes processes will adopt a “trickle-down” approach to diversity education initiatives. AHKIRAH believes that just as much knowledge can be gained and taught from the perspectives of persons with low influence/dominance as it often is from persons with high influence/dominance. This is why we believe that moderated discussion with a skilled diversity facilitator is so important. AHKIRAH facilitates moderated focus groups with organizational departments or additionally aligned groups. AHKIRAH collaboratively develops session guidelines, topics and questions with client partners and then provides a comprehensive redacted findings report to leaders and stakeholders. The reported findings are used to inform future workshop curricula.

Strategic Plan Implementation: **Training**

“**Customized Equity Workshops**”

The third part in our cohort of services involves the development, design, delivery and expert facilitation of a series of virtual and live experiential-based workshops for city employees. These workshops focus on dismantling issues identified within the Hendersonville Employee Aggregate IDI Group Profile and provide historical and cultural contexts to understand the following issues:

-  unconscious bias and intercultural communication,
-  historical context of systemic and structural racism
-  affinity and affirmation bias within brand development
-  membership and identity (understanding Whiteness and other racial identities)
-  everyday sustainable inclusive practices for local government bodies
-  provide historical and cultural contexts to understanding issues of equity, race and inclusion
-  mobilize issues of identity and unconscious bias, acculturation, racial equity, and allyship
-  provide understanding of how unconscious bias hinders inclusive environments and brand messaging







-  physically explore ways unconscious bias impacts workplace decisions and recognize the implications of a employee's own unconscious biases in the workplace
-  how to impart clear and sustainable equity-based guidelines that are suitable for local jurisdictions with transitioning demographics

AHKIRAH will provide workshop portfolios containing relevant videos, articles, vocabularies, referenced publications and additional tools to support the collaborative and individualized journey of each city employee along this journey. Physical materials will be provided before each live experiential-based session and electronically before each virtual experiential-based session. Workshop duration, participant size and delivery method (in-person or virtual) is based upon client partner needs.

*Strategic Plan Implementation: **Outreach***

"Community Connections"

AHKIRAH believes in a holistic approach to community-based equity work. This approach is based upon the conviction that the perspectives, lived experiences and expectations of all community members is fundamentally essential to transformational community initiatives and sustainable change. To that end, we offer unique participant-directed experiential workshops for community associations, local alliances, religious and civic organizations, non-profit associations, and other community-based populations. The scope and direction of these workshops is focused specifically on fostering community connections, so that misunderstood neighbors, opposing viewpoints, and myopic perspectives move towards greater understanding. Some offered topics include:

-  microaggressions and intercultural communication through an anti-racist perspective
-  personal lived experiences through a social justice context
-  systemic and structural racism
-  Our LGBTQ community: love, acceptance and allyship
-  Consciousness of culture
-  racial equity and race-based trauma
-  the evolving vocabulary of equity

Over its many years of service, AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants has had the honor of working on projects of similar size and complexity as those set forth in the RFP. We have mindfully and successfully partnered to deliver comprehensive strategic assessments, develop strategic plans, guide community improvement initiatives, facilitate executive leadership education, and provide professional development workshops to an extensive list of corporations, agencies, organizations, and community partners, including:

- 🏛️ *West Virginia University at Parkersburg* (3,600+ faculty and staff) Conducted comprehensive equity-based cultural assessments of 100+ University administrators. Presented findings report to executive leadership. Ongoing, multi-year contract for services.
- 🏛️ *o9 Solutions, Inc.* (billion-dollar international corporation, 800+ employees) Conducted comprehensive equity-based cultural assessments for 800+ international and domestic employees in India, Japan, Korea, The Netherlands, Peru, Spain, the UK and Dallas, Texas. Presented findings report to executive leadership. Provided executive coaching and exchange for executive leadership. Developed DEI Strategic Plan, Theory of Action, rebranded corporate marketing and communication around DEI initiatives.
- 🏛️ *FreedomCare, Inc.* (million-dollar national corporation, 5,000+ employees) Developed guidelines, designed sessions and facilitated moderated *Safe Space Sessions* for over 200 employees and company leaders in both English and Spanish. Compiled, analyzed and presented findings report to executive leadership. Provided executive coaching and exchange to Chief Diversity Officer.
- 🏛️ *Leadership Charlotte* (leadership-based community non-profit, 2,000+ executive workshop participants). Developed, designed, delivered and facilitated an extended series of live experiential-based workshops for city employees, city leaders and community stakeholders over a multi-year contract.

We are a consultancy comprised of highly skilled practitioners with transformational leadership experience, who work specifically in, and exclusively for, the creation of equitable community environments, the mitigation of opportunity gaps, the implementation of system-wide improvements, and the comprehensive management of those results.

We have a stellar reputation with our client partners of initiating and completing all contracted services on, or before established deadlines.

Verifiable financial statements are available upon request.

Neither AHKIRAH, nor any of its members or consultants are involved in any pending litigation that may affect its ability to provide the consulting services for this project.

REFERENCES

- (2020) Charlotte Civic Leadership Academy (Leadership Charlotte)
 Phillip Freeman, Manager, Community Leadership + Training
 704-336-1303
philip.freeman@charlottenc.gov
 Facilitated experiential workshops for city leaders on issues of equity and opportunity
 Liaised with Afeni Grace from Gantt Center for African American Art and Culture
- (2021) o9 Solutions, Inc.
 Malonie Semere, MBA
 Global HR Business Partner Lead
 (+1) 972-987-7611
malonie.semere@o9solutions.com
 Conducted equity-based cultural assessments for employees Provided executive coaching. Developed DEI Strategic Plan, Theory of Action, rebranded corporate marketing and communication around DEI initiatives.
- (Ongoing) Wildlife Works
 Mike Korchinsky
 Founder and President
 +1(415)332-8081 W
mike@wildlifeworks.com
 Currently providing ongoing *Diversity Dialogues* Executive Coaching services to corporate president

TAB C

CAPACITY STATEMENT

AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants Capability Statement

We are AHKIRAH, LLC (dba AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants), a black-owned, woman-owned, North Carolina established, equity consulting firm formed in 2018 and mindfully serving corporations, local communities, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations throughout the United States and abroad.








AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants offers engaging facilitated dialogue, programs and workshops that provide organizations and corporations with innovative and strategic approaches to increase inclusive cultural competence, advance enterprise-wide equity building, interrupt bias, and build meaningful diversity. Our firm's mission is summarized within our brand mantra: *To Serve. To Support. To Sustain.*



We understand that transformative and sustainable cultural change within organizations requires a complex approach to nuanced issues. We also believe that true cultural innovation is derived from touching the *heart and mind* of an organization, and not through exhaustive trainings and lectures. We connect the organizational *heart and mind* through our exclusive experiential workshops and participant-directed experiences.

What makes AHKIRAH distinctive?




Our unique participant-directed formats promote insight and immersion within fully customizable workshops and presentations. We successfully design client-tailored diversity strategies and inclusion plans that advance equitable leadership, personal accountability and cultural competence.

We hold core competencies in:

-  Our proven ability to identify and comprehensively address social inequalities, models of industry best practices, and strengths and challenges to fostering equitable local governance. *(Assessment)*
-  Our proven ability to work with leadership to develop and integrate DEI goals, objectives, and strategies across the organization to support our client partner's strategic objectives. *(Assessment)*
-  Our proven ability to identify gaps in workforce engagement involving diversity, equity and inclusion and recommend how to improve/close the gaps. *(Assessment)*
-  Our proven ability to utilize and synthesize comprehensive assessments, and develop agency-wide metrics, key performance indicator and a dashboard/scorecard to assist with determining what areas need culturally specific trainings and employee engagement and track the impact and effectiveness of those trainings. *(Assessment)*
-  Our proven ability to analyze and share observations regarding programmatic practice, internal and external diversity and inclusion metrics, and organizational culture and practice. *(Assessment)*
-  Our proven ability in developing and advancing initiatives for marketing outreach and to attract and retain a talented and diverse workforce with the ability to work collaboratively across differences to achieve organizational objectives. *(Implementation)*
-  Our proven ability to educate our client partners in how to build upon a common lexicon of DEI knowledge and implement a comprehensive DEI program infrastructure that creates and sustains an inclusive workplace that embraces diversity. *(Implementation)*

-  Our proven ability to develop and provide a resource plan and roadmap that includes identifying staff, finances, technology, and operational resources needed to implement a comprehensive DEI Strategic Plan. *(Implementation)*
-  Our proven ability to develop and execute transformational DEI trainings and educational programs that increase the awareness, knowledge, and skills of client partners. *(Implementation)*

Mrs. Bahiyyah A. Greer is the managing member of AHKIRAH, LLC. The firm retains an exclusive professional consultancy base of no less than ten (10) specialists. The firm holds offices in both North Carolina and Mississippi, and operates throughout the United States, with a majority of it client partnerships operating within the Southeastern portion of the United States.

-  NAICS Codes – 8742, 8748
-  DUNS Number -- 105793147
-  CAGE Code-- 8M2M4

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Deliverables	Proposed Timeline	Proposed “field” Days
Engagement Launch/Initial Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Formal announcement of selection and partnership with AHKIRAH for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion services with The City of Hendersonville  Introduction of AHKIRAH to city administrators, members of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and identified stakeholders  Consultant directs high-level <i>inventory and ideation meeting</i> before a cross-functional staff team to receive input, leverage existing processes, explore organizational culture and establish expected outcomes for the strategic plan. 	April 2022	1 day
Strategic Plan Ideation <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Work with city leadership to design the overall strategic planning process map, to identify and comprehensively address social inequalities, models of industry best practices, and strengths and challenges to fostering equitable local governance. 	April 2022	4 days

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a robust and inclusive engagement process and schedule to maximize stakeholder input while identifying gaps in workforce engagement involving diversity, equity and inclusion and recommend how to improve/close the gaps. Engage with city administrators and members of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee for context and overarching prioritization and process development. 		
Strategic Assessments / Individual Conferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staggered administration of the Intercultural Development Inventory© (IDI) to assess individual and organizational cross-cultural competence (utilizing a fourteen-day assessment window). Facilitation of individual, one-on-one, thirty minute confidential feedback and coaching calls for each respondent. Confidential review and feedback of each Individual Profile Report (IPR) and Intercultural Development Plan (IDP) Dissemination and discussion of City of Hendersonville Group Profile Results with executive leadership/stakeholder groups 	May 2022 – June 2022	60 days*
Strategic Plan Information Gathering and Synthesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize comprehensive assessments, and develop agency-wide metrics, key performance indicator and a dashboard/scorecard to assist with determining what areas need culturally specific trainings and employee engagement and track the impact and effectiveness of those trainings. Analyze and share observations regarding programmatic practice, internal and external diversity and inclusion metrics, and organizational culture and practice. 	May 2022 – June 2022	5 days
Strategic Plan Information Synthesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a <i>City of Hendersonville Theory of Action</i> in alignment with the city's communication and marketing plan. Assess and renew the city's vision, mission and core values statements. Develop a readiness and needs assessment 	July 2022	4 days
Strategic Plan Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with city administrators and members of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee to develop and provide a resource plan/roadmap that includes identifying staff, finances, technology, and operational resources needed to implement a comprehensive DEI Strategic Plan. 	July 2022 – December 2022	5 days

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and advance initiatives for marketing, outreach, and human resource equity concerns. Implement a comprehensive DEI program infrastructure that creates and sustains an inclusive workplace that embraces diversity. Outline the strategy and implementation plan for a <i>City of Hendersonville Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee (HIDEAC)</i> Develop action plans and sustainable performance measures. Finalize, submit and present completed Strategic Plan 		
Strategic Plan Implementation: Education		
Structured Focus Groups – “ <i>Safe Space Sessions</i> ” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates moderated focus groups with organizational departments or additionally aligned groups. Collaboratively develops session guidelines, topics and questions with client partners. Provides a comprehensive redacted findings report to leaders and stakeholders. 	January 2023	5 days 5 days*
Strategic Plan Implementation: Training		
“ <i>Customized Equity Workshops</i> ” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, design, and deliver expert facilitation of virtual and live experiential-based workshops. Workshops focus on dismantling issues identified within the strategic assessment. Provide historical and cultural contexts to better understand Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issues. 	February 2023 – March 2023	5 days 5 days*
Strategic Plan Implementation: Outreach		
“ <i>Community Connections</i> ” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, design and deliver expert facilitation of participant-directed experiential workshops for community-based populations. The scope and direction of these workshops is focused on fostering community connections, and move towards greater understanding. 	March 2023 – April 2023	5 days 5 days*

*denotes virtual engagement

TAB D

DEI WORK SAMPLES

DEI ASSESSMENT WORK SAMPLES

FIGURE 2: SLIDE PRESENTATION OF IDI GROUP AGGREGATE REPORT FOR CORPORATE CLIENT PARTNER (2021)

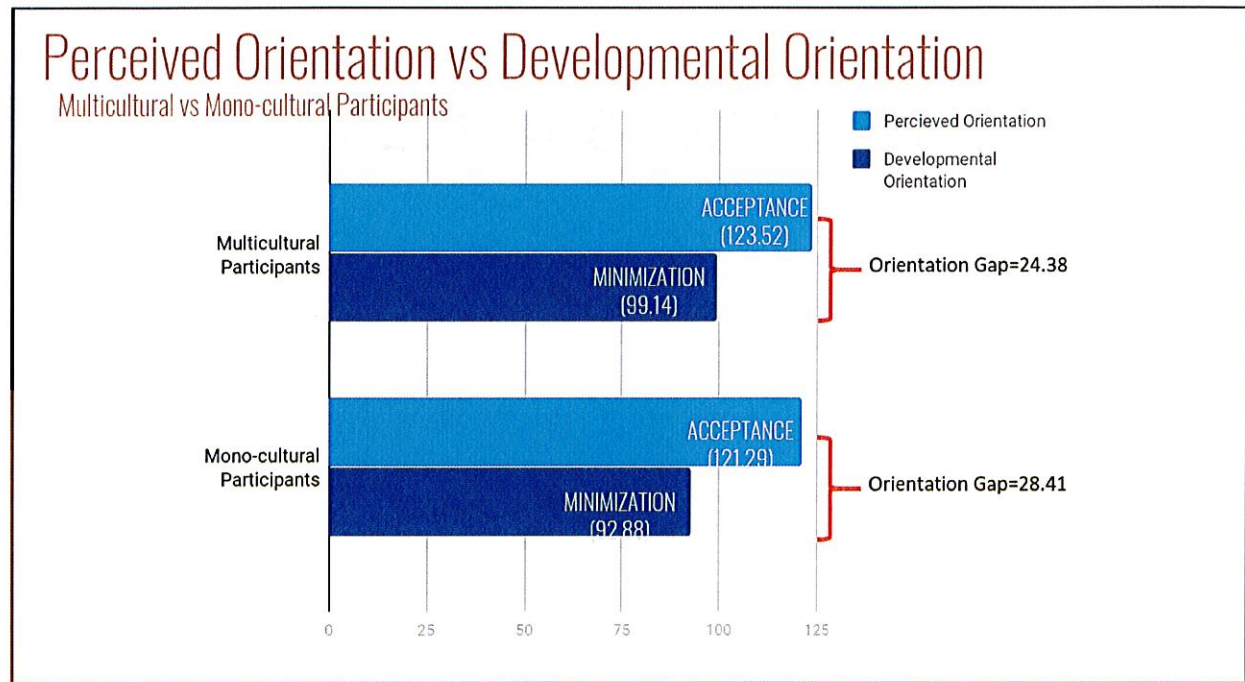


FIGURE 3: SLIDE PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS REPORT FOR “SAFE SPACE” MODERATED FOCUS GROUPS OF CORPORATE CLIENT PARTNER (2020)

1. RESPONSIVENESS & COMPENSATION

HR is consistently viewed as non responsive to employee concerns, and an obstruction to employee progress. There exists an underlying belief in a race based component to compensation. The lack of written job descriptions, updated work contracts, perceived/factual violations of worktime tracking, after accountability in overtime compliance, high turnover with Black/Brown Employees, and no transparency within the hiring process all create a strong and plausible perception of a race based pay scale. Another sentiment from Latinx employees supporting the belief of a race based component to compensation is the failure to receive additional compensation for their use of bi-lingual skills. As this skill is clearly an added value to the company, and they are hired to use this specific skill, many Latinx Employees feel unduly marginalized by not receiving additional compensation for bilingual work.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Human Relations

2. STRESS AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS

Employees share that managing personal stress has been challenging with constant upheavals to our nation's social and health-related environment. Employees state that during the pandemic, calls with FreedomCare clients have become "like a crisis hot line for mental health, which is overwhelming". Emotional stress of client cases exacerbates the daily workload of Employees, and carries over to personal life. Employees request a need to disconnect from the daily personal fatigue so that they are energized and fully present for FreedomCare clients going forward. FreedomCare Employees also stress the importance of cultural dynamics within their personal responsibilities, and as many Employees remain connected to extended family, when they return home, they are not only responsible for themselves.

3. EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS: HR DIRECTOR

A negative and predominant narrative advanced by multiple Employees within several sessions, and on several occasions relates to the Director of HR. There are several narratives which support the perception that the HR Director's introductory role as "Coach" and perceived ability to so many FreedomCare Employees was irreversibly undermined and damaged with the surprising and inept promotion to Director of People - a position viewed as belonging to the "Executive Establishment." Due in large part to the perceived lack of communication around the intention and purpose of the Director's new role, many Employees expressed distrust and cynicism towards any and all communication originating from the Director's office. Furthermore, many Employee comments advanced the belief that the Director is the ostensible spokesperson for the CEO, and that all emails with the CEO's name are actually drafted by the HR Director.

DEI TRAINING AND EDUCATION WORK SAMPLES

FIGURE 4: AHKIRAH Equity Workshop for The YMCA of the USA, Baltimore, MD (2019)



FIGURE 5: AHKIRAH Equity & Opportunity Workshop for Charlotte Civic Leadership Academy (Leadership Charlotte) (2020)



TAB E

PROJECT TEAM / STAFF

PROJECT TEAM/STAFF

AHKIRAH retains a select cadre of professional consultants, diversity professionals, corporate facilitators, subject-matter experts, and veteran advisors who are qualified to support this work as they each present multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, multi-generational and multi-experiential backgrounds. Our team of skilled equity consultants hold years of experience in the fields of organizational development, executive leadership, corporate mediation, change management and social responsibility.

There are seven professional staff assigned to this proposed project.



Bahiyyah A. Greer, Founder and Principal Consultant (she/her)

Project Responsibilities: Full Assessment and Full Implementation

Percentage of Project: 100%

Bahiyyah A. Greer is the Founder and Principal Consultant of AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants. She is a highly experienced creator and facilitator of DEI-based strategies, content and experiences. As a dynamic cultural strategist, her background is rich in multicultural, global experiences with demonstrated success in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within corporate, non-profit, and academic sectors.

With practical judicial and academic expertise, Bahiyyah's consultancy work provides client-driven, DEI-based experiential models and workshops designed to challenge, re-evaluate and reclaim structures and ideologies essential to personal truth and healing. For over fifteen years, she has examined and developed specific legal, cultural and equity-based frameworks to support diversity advocacy efforts for corporations, organizations and government agencies.



Aisha Abdul-Ali, Senior AHKIRAH Consultant and Project Manager (she/her)

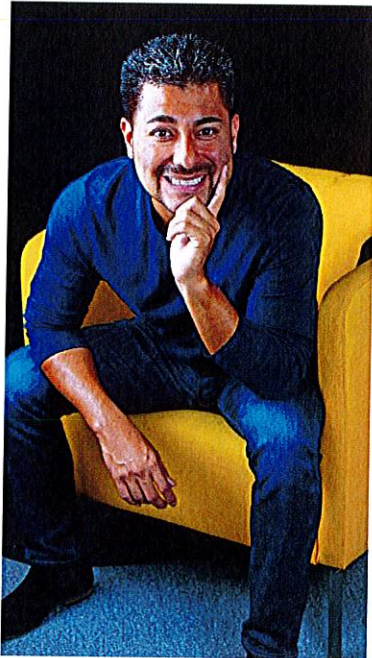
Project Responsibilities: Full Assessment and Partial Implementation

Percentage of Project: 65%

Aisha Abdul-Ali is a champion for racial justice both domestically and internationally, a businessperson, educator, and community leader.

In over 30 years of hands-on experience in racial equity, inclusion and diversity, she has had the honor to serve in the positions of Interim Director of Affirmative Action and Employment Research at Rutgers University where she co-authored Rutgers's first Affirmative Action Plan that was recognized by HEW as a model plan for institutions of higher education; Employee Relations Officer for the City of Raleigh, Staffing Specialist for the District of Columbia Government, Academic Program Developer for North Carolina Central University and Program Coordinator for Durham Technical Community College. Her expertise includes program assessment and development, strategic planning and implementation, community relations, and policy implementation.

Ms. Abdul-Ali views every day as a great opportunity to serve humanity by helping to build a better future for the next generation. Throughout her engagement in community service, volunteerism and philanthropy in the U.S. and Africa, she has had the honor to serve as consultant to African Heads of State and as U.S. Project Manager of several development projects sponsored by HALO, Sister Cities International, The Gates Foundation and others. Today, these projects continue to sustain the lives and wellbeing of countless women and children within the continent of Africa.



Daniel Valdez, AHKIRAH Consultant (he/him)

Project Responsibilities: Full Implementation

Percentage of Project: 50%

Daniel Valdez (he/him) is Senior Director of External Affairs at Welcoming America. In his role he oversees the organization's development, communications, marketing, and strategic partnerships. From 2015 – 2019 Daniel held roles in the programs team at Welcoming America, including Network Director. Prior to rejoining Welcoming America, Daniel served as the North Carolina and Mid-South Director for Hispanic Federation. With more than a decade of nonprofit management experience, he is passionate about helping advance the mission of organizations and communities working on systemic changes to bring greater prosperity and opportunity for everyone. Daniel's work has centered around advocacy and education efforts on issues like civic engagement, immigrant rights, racial justice, health disparities, and economic mobility. Daniel serves on a number of boards and committees, including the New North Carolina Project Foundation, Communities In Schools – Charlotte Mecklenburg, Charlotte Bilingual Preschool, and Board Chair for Charlotte Pride.

Daniel holds a B.A. in History and Latin American Studies from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a certificate in Nonprofit Management from Duke University. He was born in Acapulco, Mexico and has called the Charlotte region home for almost 25 years. In his spare time Daniel enjoys hiking, cooking, spending time with friends and family, and exploring new cities.



Joyce Hu, AHKIRAH Consultant (she/her)

Project Responsibilities: Partial Assessment and Full Implementation

Percentage of Project: 65%

Joyce Hu first became aware of racial, gender and cultural biases as a young girl and daughter of Chinese immigrant parents in California. These experiences framed her self-identity and led her to study sociology at UCLA. Armed with practical knowledge on systemic inequities in our society and economy, she steered her career path towards effecting change in sustainable fashion and environmental conservation. . She is the co-founder of the [Sustainable Fashion Alliance](#), a member-based group of fashion professionals committed to ethical fashion. She leads multiple DEI efforts and climate justice-centered communication in her professional work and brings her lifelong passion for social equity into the forefront of strategic operations.



Sajdah Ali, AHKIRAH Assessment and Technical Administrator (she/her)

Project Responsibilities: Full Assessment and Partial Implementation

Percentage of Project: 75%

Sajdah has extensive experience working nationally and internationally, as an educator, researcher, trainer, project manager and director with various nonprofit and collegiate organizations from Sisters Cities International (2005) to The Ministry of Education of the British Virgin Islands (2021)

Her business background stems from her 20+ years of experience in the public and private sectors of education. Sajdah is highly skilled in the management and facilitation of government contracts, developing strategic plans, spearheading resource trainings for educational professionals ,and launching projects and education-based initiatives for colleges and private schools.

Sajdah Ali conducts training and mentoring seminars for college students and start-up INGO's whose interest and mission is focused on creating sustainable solutions towards global issues such as malnutrition, adolescent health , specialized education, and lack of education among girls. Sajdah Ali holds a BA in Communication Disorders/Speech Pathology from North Carolina A&T State University (2003), MAT degree in Special Education from North Carolina Central University, (2010). ; and Certification in IDI™ Quality Assessment, Training and Consulting .



Nicholas Dunn, AHKIRAH Consultant (he/him)

Project Responsibilities: Full Assessment and Partial Implementation

Percentage of Project: 75%

Nicholas Dunn helps diverse teams thrive by building intercultural competence and cohesion. He began his intercultural career as a Peace Corps Volunteer in western China. At the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign he not only advised international students, but assessed, trained, and coached intercultural mindsets and skills for thousands of faculty members, staff, and student leaders. As a consultant, Nicholas uses research-backed and field-tested methods to assess and train the skills that bridge from diversity to inclusion. Nicholas is also passionate about supporting facilitators as a member of NAFSA Trainer Corps and the Trainer Development Team, as well as the NAFSA Intercultural Training network. He can often be spotted on bike rides with his amazing wife and three brilliant kids.



Barbara Bernier, AHKIRAH Consultant (she/her)

Project Responsibilities: Partial Assessment and Full Implementation

Percentage of Project: 65%

An experienced law professor and leader in legal education for more than twenty years, Professor Bernier has significant administrative experience in establishing several nascent law schools and accreditation. She also brings program development, implementation and legal expertise to her anti-bias consulting practice. While her law teaching is comprehensive, social justice is her primary focus in the areas of property and constitutional law. Her most recent course *Social Justice and the Supreme Court* is currently offered at the University of Illinois School of Law. Professor Bernier continues to invest in the future through summer outreach programs where she introduces younger students to law and social policy.

Professor Bernier earned her law degree from Howard University and thereafter earned an L.L.M. from Temple University Law School. Additionally, she holds a certificate from the International Institute of Human Rights, Strasbourg, France and a Diploma from the University of Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, France. She has published extensively in legal periodicals such as: The Harvard Women's Law Review, Dickinson Journal of International Law, The International Lawyer, Harvard Blackletter Law Journal, Washington and Lee Journal of Race and Ethnicity, William and Mary Women's Law Journal, Duke Journal of Gender Law and Policy and others. Selected Bar Association Memberships include: The Supreme Court of the United States, United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, The United States District Court for the District of Columbia and the District of Columbia Bar.

AHKIRAH offers an insightful, diverse, and unique team of practitioners that are personally and professionally committed to equity and inclusion. We have received extensive training to support all organizational lines and departmental offices in advancing practices and strategic initiatives. With over deep roots within various communities, we have the unique ability to assemble the right people to work on the right projects to ensure the greatest chance for success by all measurable outcomes.

TAB F






PRICE INFORMATION








AHKIRAH Legal and Diversity Consultants calculates its fees for individual product lines (deliverables) by the number of consultants necessary for the required task(s), and the number of onsite consultation dates necessary to produce the identified deliverable(s).










We are excited to work with the City of Hendersonville and understand that planning and execution are dynamic processes that require ongoing adjustment. To that end, our pricing is flexible to meet the specific needs of the project. With ongoing communication, we can ensure efficiency, effectiveness and pragmatic stewardship of resources.

Consultant Fees: \$3,000 daily rate (inclusive of all research, preparation and planning of deliverables, curriculum creation, presentation fees, workshop materials, transportation/accommodation costs, and technology fees)

Additional hourly rate: \$300 per hour.

Deliverables	Proposed Timeline	Proposed day(s) on-site	Estimated Cost
Engagement Launch/Initial Communication  Formal announcement of selection and partnership with AHKIRAH for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion services with The City of Hendersonville  Introduction of AHKIRAH Consultants to city administrators, members of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and identified stakeholders  Consultant directs high-level <i>inventory and ideation meeting</i> before a cross-functional staff team to receive input, leverage existing processes, explore organizational culture and establish expected outcomes for the strategic plan.	April 2022	1 day	\$3,500.00
Strategic Plan Ideation  Work with city leadership to design the overall strategic planning process map, to identify and comprehensively address social inequalities, models of industry best practices, and strengths and challenges to fostering equitable local governance.  Design a robust and inclusive engagement process and schedule to	April 2022	4 days	\$12,000.00

<p>maximize stakeholder input while identifying gaps in workforce engagement involving diversity, equity and inclusion and recommend how to improve/close the gaps.</p> <p> Engage with city administrators and members of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee for context and overarching prioritization and process development.</p>			
<p>Strategic Assessments/Individual Conferences</p> <p> Staggered administration of the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI) to assess individual and organizational cross-cultural competence (utilizing a fourteen-day assessment window).</p> <p> Facilitation of individual, one-on-one, thirty-minute confidential feedback and coaching calls for each respondent.</p> <p> Confidential review and feedback of each Individual Profile Report (IPR) and Intercultural Development Plan (IDP)</p> <p> Dissemination and discussion of City of Hendersonville Group Profile Results with executive leadership/stakeholder groups</p>	May 2022 – June 2022	60 days*	\$325 per assessment†
<p>Strategic Plan Information Gathering and Synthesis</p> <p> Synthesize comprehensive assessments, and develop agency-wide metrics, key performance indicator and a dashboard/scorecard to assist with determining what areas need culturally specific trainings and employee engagement and track the impact and effectiveness of those trainings.</p> <p> Analyze and share observations regarding programmatic practice,</p>	May 2022 – June 2022	5 days	\$15,000.00

internal and external diversity and inclusion metrics, and organizational culture and practice.			
Strategic Plan Information Synthesis  Develop a <i>City of Hendersonville Theory of Action</i> in alignment with the city's communication and marketing plan.  Assess and renew the city's vision, mission and core values statements.  Develop a readiness and needs assessment	July 2022	4 days	\$12,000.00
Strategic Plan Formation  Engage with city administrators and members of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee to develop and provide a resource plan/roadmap that includes identifying staff, finances, technology, and operational resources needed to implement a comprehensive DEI Strategic Plan.  Develop and advance initiatives for marketing, outreach, and human resource equity concerns.  Implement a comprehensive DEI program infrastructure that creates and sustains an inclusive workplace that embraces diversity.  Outline the strategy and implementation plan for a <i>City of Hendersonville Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee (HIDEAC)</i>  Develop action plans and sustainable performance measures.  Finalize, submit and present completed Strategic Plan	July 2022 – December 2022	5 days	\$15,000.00
Strategic Plan Implementation: Education			

Structured Focus Groups – “Safe Space Sessions”	January 2023	5 days	\$30,000.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates moderated focus groups with organizational departments or additionally aligned groups. Collaboratively develops session guidelines, topics and questions with client partners. Provides a comprehensive redacted findings report to leaders and stakeholders. 		5 days*	
Strategic Plan Implementation: Training			
“Customized Equity Workshops”	February 2023 – March 2023	5 days	\$30,000.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, design, and deliver expert facilitation of virtual and live experiential-based workshops. Workshops focus on dismantling issues identified within the strategic assessment. Provide historical and cultural contexts to better understand Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issues. 		5 days*	
Strategic Plan Implementation: Outreach			
“Community Connections”	March 2023 – April 2023	5 days	\$30,000.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, design, and deliver expert facilitation of participant-directed experiential workshops for community-based populations. The scope and direction of these workshops is focused on fostering community connections and move towards greater understanding. 		5 days*	
Total Estimated Cost			\$147,500.00†

TAB G

**REQUIRED SIGNATURE FORMS ARE
PROVIDED IN THE ORGINIAL PROPOSAL**



CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

SUBMITTER: John Connet **MEETING DATE:** 8/10/2022

AGENDA SECTION: PRESENTATION **DEPARTMENT:** Administration

TITLE OF ITEM: Presentation by Ahkirah Legal & Diversity Consultants – *John Connet, City Manager*

SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

NA

SUMMARY:

Our DEI consultants, Ahkirah Legal & Diversity Consultants will utilize our entire 90 minutes to introduce themselves and gather input from the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

BUDGET IMPACT: \$ NA

Is this expenditure approved in the current fiscal year budget? EnterTextHere

If no, describe how it will be funded. EnterTextHere

ATTACHMENTS:

Ahkirah RFP Proposal