



**Race and Cultural Relations
Leadership Network**

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Director: Toby Miller

Co-Chairs: Maria Wildridge
Orlando Jordan

Coordinator: Alexandra Nickerson

<https://indygipc.org/initiatives/rcrln/>
info@indygipc.org



Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee



A Letter From The Director

Dear Community Leader:

We are pleased to provide you with the 2023 Annual Report of the Race and Cultural Relations Leadership Network (RCRLN, The Network).

For 30 years, the Network has served as a consistent, impactful, and constructive forum for leadership to address the racially and culturally charged issues impacting our community. Notable for its longevity, impact, and sustainability, the Network continues to distinguish itself as an invaluable resource for our community.

For 30 years, the Network has addressed contentious issues from public art to policing, and the issues raised in 2023 were equally dynamic. The Network focused on mental health, homelessness, environmental justice, legislative priorities, youth, and addiction. Additionally, the Re-imagining Race Initiative began a novel process that challenged the Network to think differently when it comes to race and generated a cohort of informed leaders to continue this valuable work.

For 30 years, the Network has been a standing commitment of the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee and has regularly brought together corporate, grassroots, government, cultural, faith, and educational leadership virtually and in-person. If you have not been to a Network meeting, we are delighted to welcome you every first Friday of each month at 8:00 a.m.

For 30 years, I have had the privilege to serve as the Network's Director, a distinction that I cherish. It has been the honor of my lifetime! I am eager to cultivate and support the next iteration of the Network as it evolves to greater impact and service.

Thank you for helping to make Indianapolis a welcoming, inclusive, and vibrant community!

Always Forward,

Toby Miller
Director
Race and Cultural Relations Leadership Network

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History

The Race and Cultural Relations Leadership Network (RCRLN, “the Network”) is a standing committee of the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee (GIPC). It was established to serve as a mechanism to foster positive relationships among diverse populations and to respond to racially and culturally charged issues in the greater Indianapolis community.

The RCRLN was established in 1994 as a recommendation of Mayor Stephen Goldsmith’s “Vision Indianapolis Tomorrow” initiative. Since then, the RCRLN has operated to address issues such as police/community relations, business and economic development, immigration, and education.

Mission

The Race and Cultural Relations Leadership Network (RCRLN) convenes, educates, and mobilizes community leaders on racial and cultural relations issues to improve the quality of life in the Indianapolis area.

The RCRLN accomplishes its mission by educating its members (and the community) through multiple perspectives on the racial and cultural relations issues presented and discussed at monthly meetings and regular community forums. The RCRLN also serves as a conduit of reliable information to City-County government and existing organizations/leadership dedicated to taking appropriate action in such matters.

SCOPE

The scope of the work conducted by the RCRLN includes:

- Identify race and cultural relations issues in our city
- Inform leadership of the race and cultural relations issues in our city
- Develop, advocate for and/or implement possible solutions to real and potential race and cultural relations issues in our city
- Build and broker relationships between community groups, the Mayor’s Office, and other municipal or civic agencies

"The RCRLN continues to be a relevant dialogue forum for the expanding race and cultural issues confronting the greater Indianapolis community. The Network's ability to keep participants informed on hot-button issues and provide a safe space to engage in these multi-faceted topics are hallmarks of the forum."

- Jan Clark
Founding Co-Chair



Practices

The RCRLN is unique in that it is comprised of business, civic, and community leaders who volunteer their time and services to study and improve race and cultural relations in the city and its institutions. It is not a board of directors, an organization, or an action group. Instead, it is a process, a network and forum, and a convening agent and facilitator. It is among the longest sustainable community relations processes in the country.

The RCRLN is empowered to convene and educate local leaders on race and cultural issues, foster communication and action, and build relationships between community groups and local government. When necessary, the RCRLN may make recommendations for specific action to the GIPC Executive Committee.

The RCRLN aims to improve the quality of life of all residents and guests by coordinating responses to issues and situations with racial or cultural implications that arise within the greater Indianapolis area.

Protocols

2023 Regular Business Meetings were held virtually on the first Friday of each month, from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. via WebEx virtual meetings.

At the beginning of each meeting, a Co-Chair reminds all in attendance of the core values of communication within the Network: respect for opinions, civil discourse, and confidentiality of discussions. The RCRLN welcomes community members to attend, listen, provide feedback, and make inquiries as time allows.



“The Race & Culture Relations Leadership Network keeps its hand on the pulse when it comes to community affairs. The Network remains vigilant and continues to raise the level of focus on the root causes of some of the community’s problems rather than treating the symptoms. Working closely with the City and residents supports the critical desire to keep communities safe and address the needs of our families.”

*- Gloria Berlanga King, EdD
Diversity & Inclusion Manager, Eskenazi Health
Former RCRLN Co-Chair*



Year in Review

In 2023, the RCRLN facilitated 11 regular business meetings, with an annual in-person meeting held in December. Attendance numbers for the regular business meetings ranged from 56- 81. All meeting recordings are accessible at: <https://indygipc.org/initiatives/rcrln/rcrln-meeting-recordings/>.

Meeting Summaries

January 6, 2023 | City-County Resources, Mayoral Updates

Attendees: 81

Lauren Rodriguez, Deputy Mayor of Public Health & Safety for the City of Indianapolis, spoke on City-led mental health resources sponsored. Sarah Riordon from the Indianapolis Bond Bank presented updates on the Community Justice Campus. Mayor Joe Hogsett gave his annual remarks, addressing Indianapolis' successes and opportunities that came from 2022.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=f0d5d73b1c1d7b7357206df011cdb13f>

(pw: Rcrln010623)

February 3, 2023 | Asian American Discrimination, Human Trafficking

Attendees: 69

Rupal Thanawala, President of Asian American Alliance, Inc, presented on incidents of racism against the Asian American community and how RCRLN members can prevent hate. Katie Blair and JauNae Hanger spoke on current legislative updates at the Indiana Statehouse. Jiamia McCoy and Malorie Palmer of Indiana Legal Services provided an overview of human trafficking prevention resources in Indiana.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=76fe357d334789fb8f9602fab106331e>

(pw: Rcrln020323)

March 3, 2023 | Marion County Health, Youth Development

Attendees: 76

Dr. Virginia Caine, Director and Chief Medical Officer of the Marion County Public Health Department, presented on Covid-19 vaccination statistics in Marion County. Dennis Bland, Esq. and President of the Center for Leadership Development, introduced the newest goals and fundraising events for the Center. Brandon Randall of TruColors Indy presented on upcoming youth development programming.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=fc4f6f21b4dbac38472de8644d3a18ed>

(pw: Rcrln030323)

April 14, 2023 | Hate Incident Report, Legislative Update

Attendees: 66

David Goldenberg, Regional Director of the Midwest Anti-Defamation League, and Suzanne Rothenburg, Associate Regional Director and Indiana Community Engagement Manager of the Midwest Anti-Defamation League, joined to share updates on increasing hate crime incidents, particularly anti-semitic “swatting.” Katie Blair, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy at the ACLU of Indiana, provided an update on the 2023 session of the Indiana General Assembly. RCRLN Leadership Education and Development Specialist (LEADS) George Middleton introduced the Re-Imagining Race Initiative.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=a2a75e45e351f5a087f3bba06445e126> (pw: Rcrln0401423)

May 5, 2023 | Our Burmese Neighbors, Our Haitian Neighbors

Attendees: 69

Lun Pieper, United Nations Moderator, Julie Zing, Executive Director of Chin Community of Indiana, and Megan Hochbein, Senior Director of Operations at Exodus Refugee Immigration, presented on the unique challenges faced by the Indiana Burmese community. Dafney Lavache, Moise Duge, Alex Duge, and Leonce Jean-Baptiste of the Haitian Association of Indiana spoke on the history and needs of the Haitian community in Indianapolis. RCRLN LEADS George Middleton provided an update on the Re-Imagining Race Initiative.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=3b94d36ad014ff4d108961ffdd907347> (pw: Rcrln050523)

June 2, 2023 | Annual Youth Panel, Re-Imagining Race Initiative

Attendees: 70

Brandon Randall, Founder of TruColors Indy, and JauNae Hanger, President of the Children's Policy and Law Initiative of Indiana, facilitated a group discussion featuring Tru Dialogues youth speakers and CPLI's Youth Justice Cohort. RCRLN LEADS George Middleton provided an update on the Re-Imagining Race Initiative.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=b99d268e0c7e1accfb5c68e5ca767337> (pw: Rcrln060223)

July 7, 2023 | Conner Prairie, Indy Pride, Re-Imagining Race Initiative

Attendees: 56

Norman Burns, President and CEO of Conner Prairie, and Dr. Charlene Fletcher, Curatorial Director of Conner Prairie, shared plans for the new Promised Land as Proving Ground experience at Conner Prairie with the Network. Shelly Snider, Executive Director of Indy Pride, provided an overview of Indy Pride's 2023 Pride Month events. RCRLN LEADS George Middleton provided an update on the Re-Imagining Race Initiative.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=bcf2f833b4da7b45be343ceb9b92b211> (pw: Rcrln070723)

August 4, 2023 | Maternal Mortality, Environmental Justice**Attendees: 73**

Dr. Velvet Miller and Dr. Lauren Dungy-Poythress, President and Vice-President of the organization Not 1 More, presented the five leading issues facing black women in maternal health. To discuss the impacts and solutions of climate change, Delaney Barber, Energy and Climate Manager of the Hoosier Environmental Council, shared the Council's framework for environmental justice.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=ea1c1b20bf8b763916d5b896f11def77>

(pw: RcrIn080423)

September 1, 2023 | CRT Activations, Youth Violence, Hate Crimes**Attendees: 49**

Community Response Team (CRT) members Toby Miller, Ramona Ward, and Ashley Gurvitz and IMPD Deputy Chief Kendale Adams spoke on the CRT's recent activations in response to increased officer-involved shootings in 2023. Brandon Randall of Tru Colors Indy discussed root causes and potential solutions to combat increasing youth gun violence. The Network also received a hate crime and "swatting" advisory from Ben Popp, Investigative Researcher for the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=f69e3620ba9781f213153bf6e2c8922d>

(pw: RcrIn090123)

October 6, 2023 | Hispanic Heritage Month, Spirit & Place Festival**Attendees: 61**

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, Co-Chair Maria Wildridge facilitated a panel discussion featuring Ruth Morales (Office of the Mayor), Ana Santiago (Office of the Mayor), Charlie Garcia (C. Garcia & Associates), Rafael Sanchez (Old National Bank), and Marlene Dotson (Indiana Latino Institute). Pamela Blevins Hinkle, Director of the Spirit and Place Festival, shared a history of the event and an overview of the upcoming activities within this year's theme: "Nourishment."

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=ae2137c51b1460d9f7fdee613f57e3c8>

(pw: RcrIn100623)

November 4, 2022 | Homelessness in Indy, IMPD Updates**Attendees: 63**

Chelsea Haring-Cozzi, Executive Director of the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention & Prevention, gave an overview of the state of homelessness in Indianapolis and the resources available to our homeless neighbors. Chief of Police Randal Taylor provided updates on the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department.

Recording Link: <https://indy.webex.com/indy/ldr.php?RCID=d0375b8cba76802aa435dfc50e0a81a9>

(pw: RcrIn110323)

December 1, 2023 | Annual Meeting**Attendees: 25**

The Annual December Meeting brought RCRLN Members together in-person to review the year of discussion and connection. U.S. Attorney Zach Myers shared his office's processes for addressing hate and bias incidents.

Notes

The Race and Cultural Relations Leadership Network is a standing committee of the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee (GIPC).

Created in 1965, The Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee is a non-partisan organization that partners with leaders of the public and private sectors of Indianapolis to study, discuss, and address issues of concern and areas of opportunity to advance the progress of the City.

Driven by business and civic leaders, GIPC represents the bipartisan alliance that is a continuing example of the public-private partnership in Indianapolis. Its diverse Board of Directors, which makes up GIPC's membership, collaborates with local government and other organizations that have played a vital role in the city's many successes.

Through task forces and interactive board meetings, GIPC continues to help the City of Indianapolis improve its operations and solve problems. By maintaining the Race and Cultural Relations Leadership Network, GIPC provides a forum for better racial understanding in the community. With challenges and opportunities on the horizon – issues such as affordable housing, early childhood education, food access, the future of Downtown Indianapolis, and the city's cultural growth – GIPC will continue to be a vessel for progress in Indianapolis.

Interested in membership?

Email info@indygipc.org for more information.

Progress with us @indygipc:





Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee