



## RISE TOGETHER - FEB. 4, 2025

### SPOTLIGHT ON DE&I

## HISTORICAL SITES TO VISIT DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Did you know that Columbus is filled with historical landmarks that pay homage to the rich fabric of its Black community? From locations honoring brave abolitionists to parks named after civil rights activists, there are plenty of places to visit and learn. Some of the many noteworthy locations are:

- [The Lincoln Theatre](#): This historic theater served as a major jazz center from the 1930s to the 1960s. Saved by the completion of mandatory repairs to the outer building in 1992, the Lincoln Theatre was officially added to the National Register of Historic Places.
- [Maymee Moore Park](#): Maymee Moore was known as “the Mother of the Columbus Branch of the NAACP” and stood alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Washington, D.C., as he delivered his memorable “I Have a Dream” speech. This park is named after her to commemorate her contributions to the Civil Rights Movement.
- [The Long Street Cultural Wall](#): This wall is an artistic homage to Columbus’ black heritage that highlights the diversity and creativity of our City’s art scene.
- [The Kelton House Museum & Garden](#): This historic home showcases the compassion and bravery of the Kelton family, who offered shelter and assistance to those seeking freedom.

These historic sites are powerful reminders of the courage and determination of individuals who dreamed of and created a better world. This Black History Month, take the opportunity to visit one of these sites and celebrate the inspiring stories of those who shaped our history.

- **Black History Month (February):** This annual observance celebrates Black history and culture. Black educators and Black United Students (BUS) at Kent State University first proposed Black History Month in February 1969, before holding the first celebration at Kent State Jan. 2-Feb. 28, 1970. President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976. Black History Month is observed in Canada during February, and in Ireland and the United Kingdom in October.
- **Lunar New Year (Feb. 10):** This holiday marks the dawn of a new year based on the lunar calendar. It corresponds with several different ethnicities.
- **Lantern Festival (Feb. 12):** This festival marks the first full moon of the new lunar year and is celebrated two weeks after Chinese New Year, marking the end of those celebrations. Celebrations involve enjoying lanterns, lantern riddles, eating tangyuan/yuanxiao (ball dumplings in soup), lion dances, dragon dances and more. The use of lanterns signifies letting go of the previous year.
- **Lailat al Bara’a (Feb. 13-14):** During this major occasion in the Islamic calendar, Muslims pray and seek forgiveness for their wrongdoings. It is said to bring good fortune for the entire year and purify them of their sins.
- **Parinirvana Day (Feb. 15):** Also known as Nirvana Day, this Mahayana Buddhist holiday is celebrated annually to commemorate the death of the Buddha when he attained complete nirvana, or parinirvana.
- **World Day of Social Justice (Feb. 20):** Celebrated annually, this event invites global citizens to rally around the pursuit of equity, dismantling of barriers to inclusivity and the ennoblement of human dignity for all.

- ## AROUND TOWN
- [Black History Month Webinar: “I’m the Family Historian—Now What?”](#): Feb. 6, 7-8 p.m., Virtual
  - [Black History Month Celebration and Poindexter Award Ceremony](#): Feb. 11, 5:30-7 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chambers (90 W. Broad St. | 43215)
  - [The Tea Room](#): Feb. 15, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., at Ohio History Center (800 E. 17th Ave. | 43211)
  - [Financial Empowerment: A Black History Month Networking Celebration](#): Feb. 19, 5-7 p.m., at Adelphi Bank (769 E. Long St. | 43202)
  - [Black History Month Pop-up Concert featuring the Columbus Cultural Youth Orchestra](#): Feb. 16, 2-3 p.m., at Columbus Museum of Art (800 E. Long St. | 43215)
  - [All Arts Day: A Celebration Of Aminah Robinson](#): Feb. 15, 12-4 p.m. at King Arts Complex (835 Mt. Vernon Ave. | 43203)
  - [Voices of Injustice presents The Lynched Among Us](#): Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m., at Lincoln Theatre (769 E. Long S tr. | 43203)
  - [Black History Month Webinar: “There’s an App for That!” Using Technology in Family History Research](#): Feb. 20, 7-8 p.m., held virtually.
  - [Black History Month Showcase & Open House](#): Feb. 21, 5:30 p.m., at Arts & College Preparatory Academy (4401 Hilton Corporate Dr. | 43232)
  - [29 events will be held at different Columbus Metropolitan Library branches](#) throughout February

## NEWS AND INFORMATION

### DEI TOUR & LEARN: TOUR THE HISTORIC KING ARTS COMPLEX

The next DEI Committee Tour & Learn is approaching! Join us for a free tour of the historic Martin Luther King Jr. Performing and Cultural Arts Complex (835 Mt Vernon

2/18/2025

If you’d like to attend, make sure to check with your supervisor and [register by Feb. 21](#). On the day of, park in the back and enter through the front door. We hope to see you there!

## QUARTERLY LEADERSHIP STAFF MEETING UPDATES

Missed last week’s Quarterly Leadership Staff Meeting? No worries! [You can now access meeting notes, FAQs, and the presentations shared during the session on the intranet](#). Simply visit the Recreation and Parks page and click on the Quarterly Leadership Meeting box. Please note, you must be on the City network to access the intranet.

## 2025 PPO HEALTH PLAN OPEN ENROLLMENT: IMPORTANT DETAILS

The Open Enrollment period for the 2025 PPO Health Plan runs from Jan. 27 through Feb. 28. This is your opportunity to enroll in the PPO Health Plan and make changes to your existing coverage. Any updates or changes made during this enrollment period will take effect on March 1, 2025.

You’ll receive your 2025 Open Enrollment mailer at home soon. Take a moment to review the detailed information about the PPO Health Plan, Pharmacy, Dental, Vision and Basic Life Insurance options. Then, complete your enrollment by logging in to [Dayforce](#) and finalizing your choices no later than Feb. 28.

Don’t want to make any changes or enroll? While no action is required, it’s highly recommended you review your elections to ensure everything is current.

For more information, visit the [Employee Benefits and Wellness webpage](#), or contact the Employee Benefits and Wellness Office at [EmployeeBenefitsandWellness@columbus.gov](mailto:EmployeeBenefitsandWellness@columbus.gov) or 614-645-8624. Take this opportunity to review your options and ensure your coverage meets your needs for the upcoming year!

## GET A HEAD START ON TAX SEASON: DOWNLOAD YOUR 2024 W-2 TODAY

Tax season is here! Make filing your taxes easier by downloading your 2024 W-2 statement directly from Dayforce. Follow these simple steps W-2:



## KEY DATES FEBRUARY

- DEI Tour and Learn**  
Feb. 25 | 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | King Arts Complex
- 2025 Open Enrollment Ends**  
Feb. 28

## APRIL

- Quarterly Leadership Staff Meeting**  
April 22 | 1-3 p.m. | 1111 East Broad St., Continental Room
- Play To Win Town Hall for Staff**  
April 30 | 1-2:30 | Fawcett Center

3. Click on Year End Forms.
4. Use the drop-down menu to select the 2024 W-2 – City of Columbus statement.

Start preparing your taxes now and avoid the last-minute rush!

## AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE: EMPOWERING MINORITY LEADERS IN OPRA

The Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) is on a mission to create a thriving network of minority leaders. OPRA is building the Minority Leaders of OPRA group, a networking list of minority leaders who are looking to connect with others who share a passion and vision for recreation and parks. Whether you’re seeking mentorship, collaboration or just want to expand your network, this is your chance to join a dynamic, supportive community.

Sign up for the [Minority Leaders Interest List](#) and join a movement celebrating cultural diversity and fostering an inclusive, empowering environment!

## CELEBRATING YOU

## KENNEDY BILLUPS NAMED A 2025 NRPA 30 UNDER 30 HONOREE



We’re thrilled to celebrate Kennedy Billups, one of our very own, as a 2025 honoree in the prestigious NRPA 30 Under 30 program!

This recognition, a collaboration between the NRPA Young Professional Network and *Parks & Recreation* magazine, highlights 30 rising stars in parks and recreation who serve as everyday champions in their communities. The program honors professionals making a profound impact on both their communities and the field of parks and recreation.

As Assistant Manager of the APPS Job Readiness Program, Kennedy leads a team dedicated to creating meaningful opportunities for youth. Her work in building business partnerships has opened doors to internships and career pathways, ensuring the next generation is equipped for success.

Beyond her role at APPS, Kennedy is a trailblazer in fostering equity and inclusion. She co-founded the City’s first women’s employee resource group, which empowers women through personal and professional development while advocating for a more inclusive workplace. [Read more about Kennedy’s accomplishments.](#)

Congratulations, Kennedy!



## TRAINING

Check out these upcoming training opportunities.

- **March (Date TBD): [Parks and Green Space Equity](#)**, City Parks Alliance
- **March (Date TBD): [Technology and Data in Parks](#)**, City Parks Alliance
- **April 2: [Building Culture and Advanced Leadership Skills](#)**, Ohio Parks and Recreation Association
- **May (Date TBD): [Climate Resilience and Parks](#)**, City Parks Alliance

## PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Have you recently earned a degree, award or certification? [Let us know, and we will share your accomplishment in the newsletter!](#)

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

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#### KERRY KICOS, CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSOCIATE

##### SHE/HER/HERS



**How long have you been with the department?** 10 months

**What’s your favorite aspect of working for the department?** Learning about all of the fantastic things that we do for the community.

**What is your favorite project that you’ve worked on?** Gaining as much information about the different aspects of the department so that we can develop a strong customer service team.

**What’s your favorite ice cream?** UDF Peppermint Stick Chocolate Chip

**What’s your favorite book or movie?** Teen Wolf (80’s style)

**What’s one piece of advice you live by?** Everyone can teach you something!

## ARCHIVE

