



Project REAP appoints Bowman to executive director

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Manikka Bowman

"My vision for the future of REAP is to build upon past success to have a profound impact on a commercial real estate industry that is now uniquely open to diversifying its workforce," said Manikka Bowman, the new executive director of Project REAP (Real Estate Associate Program).

"Project REAP is uniquely positioned to collaborate with industry leaders to ensure companies have a pathway to achieve their Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) goals and diverse talent has an opportunity to lead at every level of commercial real estate" Bowman said.

G. Lamont Blackstone, REAP's chair of the board, said, "Manikka brings a special combination of skill sets and experiences that span the commercial real estate sector, advocacy and public service. She has impressed our board with her keen insights of what is necessary to mobilize support for a cause -- particularly Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Her experience in the Boston metro also coincides with a talent market we wish to grow and serve."

Bowman joins REAP following a yearlong search for the ideal candidate to helm the nonprofit organization created in 1997 and launched in 1998. The needle has not moved far enough. Bowman said, "The percent of persons of color occupying leadership roles in commercial real estate remains minimal. They are the end-users; but are not part of the teams that shape the built environment."

Her tenure begins at a pivotal juncture when, she said, "Our nation collectively experienced a racial reckoning. Now is the time to leverage the moment to have a lasting impact. We need to push the industry to offer opportunities that create a pipeline to the C-suite."

Bowman formerly served as the director of policy for the ULI Boston/New England District Council where she led policy research and provided CRE thought leadership to the area market. She also oversaw the ULI Technical Assistance Panel program which aids cities and towns tackling challenging land use issues and launched Pathways to Inclusion which connects CRE professionals of color to the organization's Boston network.

She is the former vice-chair of the Cambridge School Committee for Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) where she negotiated four contract agreements over the past two years with the educational union -- ensuring students and staff had access to safe, in-person learning conditions. Bowman also chaired the CPS's Buildings and Grounds Committee providing oversight to a trio of redevelopment projects totaling over \$500 million.

A Boston Business Journal 40 Under 40 honoree, Bowman was a regular contributor to Banker & Tradesman, a major publication covering Massachusetts' financial services and real estate industries and has written for numerous other outlets. She also leads a recently launched development firm. Bowman serves on the board of Abundant Housing Massachusetts, a nonprofit committed to expanding housing opportunities in every community in the Commonwealth. She is a proud alum of an HBCU, Bethune-Cookman University, where she received a bachelor's degree in sociology, and holds dual master's degrees in Divinity and Urban Policy from Columbia Theological Seminary and Georgia State University.

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