



**Grand Rapids
Urban League**

*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

December 19, 2019

Joseph D. Jones, President and CEO

For Immediate Release

Urban League Appoints Lisa Knight as VP and Chief Program Officer

Grand Rapids, MI Grand Rapids Urban League today announced the appointment of Lisa Butler Knight as its new Vice President and Chief Program Officer.

With over 25 years of experience working with children youth, and young adults, Lisa will be responsible for key regional programs and operations activity, including all aspects of the League's programs and service delivery system, with a priority on strategic program development through a racial equity lens; data-driven planning and decision-making; outcome-based evaluation; talent development; and external relationship-building.

Knight previously held a number of positions at the Urban League, including Project Director for the agency's health programs focused on tobacco prevention, eliminating secondhand smoke exposure, STEM education for girls of color, and environmental justice. Knight has also led the groundbreaking and transformative work of the League's Saving Our Sons-Sowing Opportunity Now (SON) program uniquely designed for young Black males ages 16-24.

Knight's most recent role at the League was Director of Health, Wellness and Youth, where she leads a talented team of professionals working on a number of initiatives aimed at youth empowerment including: Educational Empowerment; Economic Empowerment; Health and Quality of Life Empowerment; and Civil Rights, Racial Equity, and Justice Empowerment. In addition, she has served as a Co-Facilitator and Trainer within the Urban League's division of Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and is a much sought after presenter and speaker on these meaningful social values. Even in her new and expanded leadership role, Lisa will continue to guide, direct, manage and advance many Urban League community initiatives and serve as its representative on a number of local, state, and national platforms.

Joe Jones, President and CEO of the Urban League said:

"Lisa is a shining example of transformational leadership. Her unrelenting commitment to and investment in young people and all of the programs and services of the Urban League has been pivotal to our growth and impact. Our youth programs are now a national model, showing what support, guidance, education and love makes possible for our young people. We look forward to Lisa's leadership in modeling multi-layered support and youth development providing opportunities through holistic education, programming, and many other ways that creates access for all to live and thrive in Grand Rapids and throughout West Michigan."



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Brenda Moore, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the Urban League said:
“Lisa has been an incredibly energetic and central force of the Urban League since 2013. She is beautiful, talented, passionate, a tenacious servant leader, advocate and organizer. I have seen few who are as committed to our historic mission and fewer still who have contributed as much to the Urban League in so short a time as Lisa Butler-Knight. Her love for our community and our work is immeasurable.”

Founded in 1943, the Grand Rapids Urban League—soon to be the Urban League of West Michigan, is a non-profit, impact organization advancing equal opportunities on behalf of African Americans and all other under-served Grand Rapids area residents in the achievement of social and economic equality. The League’s focus and its programs are concentrated in four life domains: employment and workforce development, education and parent empowerment, health, wellness and youth, the elimination of homelessness and the preservation of safe and affordable housing. The Urban League annually serves more than 8,000 people across all programs.

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