

Adriane V. Jefferson

Adriane V. Jefferson (she/her/hers) is a national award-winning cultural equity expert, arts administrator, and public speaker. Initiator of the cultural equity plan for the city of New Haven, she has worked professionally in the arts and culture sector for more than 18 years and has dedicated her career to cultural shift advocacy.

Adriane is currently the director of cultural affairs for the city of New Haven and executive director of New Haven Festivals Inc., where she leads the city on cultural equity and anti-racism initiatives. She and her department have created the Arts for Anti-racism Pledge, The Unapologetically Radical Conference, the city of New Haven's inaugural Black Wall Street Festival, and the first cultural equity plan in the state of Connecticut.

As part of her work with the city of New Haven, Adriane oversees membership in the Government Alliance of Race & Equity and has formed the Core Race Equity Task Force. The task force plays an advisory and leadership role for the mayor and executive leadership on internal and external race equity issues and equitable system improvements. Adriane is also a member of the Closing Gaps Network-Living Cities Initiative, which provides ongoing leadership training on community organizing, anti-racism principles, equity assessments, and capacity building.

Adriane obtained a B.A. in Popular Music from Florida Memorial University in 2009, graduating cum laude, and then received an M.A. in Arts Administration from Savannah College of Arts and Design. Since that time, she has worked as an educator in both music and theater. Between 2008 and 2010, she helped to develop the drama program for Alonzo Mourning Charities' Overtown Youth Center and The Gibson Charter School. Adriane returned to Connecticut in 2015 to serve as the executive director and senior director of programs for Writer's Block InK in New London. She was later confirmed as a member of its board of directors.

In 2016, Adriane became an arts program manager for Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development. In this role, she developed groundbreaking programs such as The Arts Workforce Initiative Paid Employment Program and the READI (Relevance, Equity, Access, Diversity, and Inclusion) Music Conference, which has placed hundreds of young creative workers of color in arts jobs or given them other professional development opportunities across the state.

Alongside her work as a cultural equity expert, Adriane currently serves as a councilwoman for Connecticut Arts Council; an advisory board member for the New England Foundation for the Arts; an advisory board member for the Yale Center for British Art; and as an ex-officio board member for the Shubert Theater. She has

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received the 40 Under 40 award from the Urban Professionals Network, the American Express Emerging Leadership Award from Americans for the Arts, and the 40 Under 40 award from *Connecticut Magazine*. Her anti-racism artwork has been featured in *Black Business Enterprise*, *Yahoo News*, *Fox News*, *NBC*, and Americans for the Arts' *Arts Link Magazine*. *New Haven Biz* recently named her as one of the Top 5 leaders to watch in 2023. She is a mother of one, and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.