



## ITS America Equity Member Spotlight – Yunex Traffic

The ITS America’s Equity Community of Practice is comprised of ITS America members who share a common interest in cross-cutting issues such as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The Community of Practice members take innovative approaches focused on building a gender inclusive transportation ecosystem that is user friendly, cross-sectional, resourced with community partners, sustained with investments, and built with knowledge.

The goal of the Equity Community of Practice is to increase awareness, grow DEI in transportation ecosystems, share best practices currently utilized by our members, discuss lessons learned, engage membership on DEI initiatives, and bring value to our membership.

Our 2024 ITS America Equity Community of Practice is Co-Led by Tiffany Fuller, Director of the Strategic Planning Unit at the New York City Department of Transportation and Ralph Cochran, the External Director at the Central Ohio Transit Authority.

ITS America members will present programs in place at their organizations to attendees of the Community of Practice meetings to show how their company or organization prioritizes DEI.

To kick off the inaugural Equity Community of Practice series of meetings, our first presentation was from Mindy Gillespie, Head of Communications, Yunex Traffic. Mindy Gillespie highlighted the diversity, equity, and inclusion work currently being conducted at Yunex Traffic with a focus on Employee Resource Groups.

### 1. How does Yunex Traffic promote inclusivity?

Mindy discussed how inclusivity drives better performance, more profits, and creates a culture of adaptability. She highlighted how the first thing she did when she started at Yunex Traffic was to get involved in the culture and pioneered a group of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). These ERGs allow for supportive communities that bring people together to share common backgrounds, interests, and experiences. The ERGs established the YOU Community Scholarship, a grant program that gives employees a voice and the ability to choose projects important to their communities.

Mindy provided an example of their first winner, Mark Siegal’s community project, a benefactor of the YOU Community Scholarship that went towards the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) project. CASA is a national program in Travis County, Texas, that assists children separated from their families to have access to the resources they need such as mentoring programs, donating bikes to the residential treatment centers, and funding for bike education and training for at risk youth.



## 2. How does Yunex Traffic focus on diversity?

Yunex Traffic hosts a quarterly webinar series focused on diversity to collaborate with subject matter experts. A recent web series highlighted autism inclusion and discussed what companies can do to offer a place where neurodivergent employees can thrive. By prioritizing practices such as these and fostering a work environment that prioritizes a sense of belonging, we can help create a work environment that is a safe space for everyone who makes our company what it is today!

### Question and Answer Session:

**After the presentation, ITS America members provided feedback on what they believe companies can do to successfully implement ERG groups.**

### What exactly is an Employee Resource Group's (ERG)?

- ERGs are supportive communities within our organization that bring people together who share common backgrounds, interests, or experiences. These groups were created to foster a sense of belonging and inclusion, ensuring every member of our team feels valued and supported.

### What is some advice for organizations to implement ERGs?

- There is a delicate balance with when, where, and how these resource groups should be open, diverse, and inclusive. The most helpful approach is to set up strategic meetings with ERGs and those who hold positions of power to ensure a balance is being maintained.
- Our company's first ERG was a women's group. This group discussed the differences between equity and equality with the executive team.
- My organization does it right by bringing men into the conversation to acknowledge their role in how they can promote the voices and careers of those in the ERGs. If you do not have some of the people whose voices dominate the transportation industry, then you cannot be heard outside the ERG. It is important to work collaboratively so that the voices often left out of the conversation can instead be amplified. A way that I have used my voice outside of the ERG's is by joining ITS America's Equity COP. I am more seasoned in my career and can provide a voice for younger professionals who may have career concerns.
- A hurdle I am currently trying to overcome is how we can engage a male-dominated industry in discussions that lead to more diversity in perspective and to amplify voices that are often left out of these spaces.



## How can an organization's successful implementation of ERGs tie to transportation equity?

The successful implementation of ERGs within an organization can significantly contribute to transportation equity in several ways:

- **Diverse Perspective Representation** – ERGs often consist of members from various backgrounds, including those who are directly affected by transportation inequities. Their unique perspectives can help organizations identify and address barriers to equitable transportation options for employees and the community.
- **Advocacy and Awareness** – ERG's can raise awareness about transportation issues, advocating for policies or initiatives that support better transportation options for underserved communities. By engaging employees in conversations about transportation equity, organizations can foster a culture of inclusivity and social responsibility.
- **Partnership and Collaboration** – Organizations can leverage ERGs to partner with local transportation agencies, community organizations, and advocacy groups. This collaboration can lead to projects aimed at improving access to public transit, bicycle infrastructure, and other forms of sustainable transportation.
- **Informed Decision Making** – Through the insights gained from ERG members about their transportation needs and challenges, organizations can make informed decisions related to employee commuting options, work-from-home policies, and subsidies for public transit, directly impacting transportation equity.
- **Development of Programs** – ERG's can drive the creation of programs that provide resources for employees who may face transportation barriers. This might include shuttle services, carpools, or financial assistance for public transportation costs, leading to a more equitable work environment.

By aligning ERGs with transportation equity initiatives, organizations can not only enhance their internal culture but also contribute positively to the larger community fostering a more equitable and accessible transportation system for all.



**Conclusion:**

The Equity Community of Practice aims to increase awareness and grow diversity, equity, and inclusion in the transportation ecosystem, and share best practices from ITS America members. This Community of Practice creates a transportation ecosystem that allows participation from all communities. Through these collaborative efforts of fostering a dynamic environment, the goal is to leave every member feeling empowered and valued. During the member presentation, Mindy Gillespie highlighted how Yunex Traffic is bringing inclusivity and diversity into their workplace. This led to a fruitful conversation around shared experiences and potential solutions members think would bring about wholistic and meaningful results.

If you would like to highlight what your organization is doing around diversity, equity, and inclusion, reach out to Tina Williams ([twilliams@itsa.org](mailto:twilliams@itsa.org)) or Eryn Banton ([ebanton@itsa.org](mailto:ebanton@itsa.org)) and help us create a safer, greener, smarter transportation ecosystem for all.