



BOARD PROFILE

Valarie Boykins

Member since 2022 representing Hamilton County. She serves on the board's Human Resources and SOAR committees.

Boykins also serves on the board of UMADAOP of Cincinnati, Inc., and is an alumna of the Hamilton County Commission on Women & Girls, where she co-authored the commission's pay equity pledge. After her term on the commission ended, Boykins became a founding member of Allies in Action, an organization of civic minded, socially conscious women (many of whom previously served on the Commission on Women & Girls) who are compassionate and committed to advancing the needs of women in our community.

What interested you in serving on Council on Aging's Board of Trustees?

COA is on the forefront of enhancing the quality of life for the community's largest age group, developing and striving for continuous improvement on valuable resources to aid and support older adults.

Looking ahead, what do you see as the biggest challenge(s) facing Council on Aging and older adults in our community?

Loss of funding and increased demand for services. As the aging population grows, we'll experience a human capital shortage which will make it difficult to provide quality services that meet the healthcare, clinical and behavioral health needs of older adults.



The increasing devaluing of older adult voices is another concern. COA is able to fill that gap through its advocacy and passion in supporting our older adults.

What excites you most about COA's future and how do you see yourself contributing to it?

We have the right leadership at the right time to steer the organization during these challenging times. The collective voices and diverse sector experiences of the board and leadership team contribute to a collaborative relationship with the CEO.

As a caregiver and older adult, I am able to lend a voice on actual needs both personally and professionally. I look forward to our continued advocacy to support funding and other resources for COA and the community we serve.

Which COA value speaks most to you? Why?

Teamwork. COA is committed to the wellness of older adults and individuals with disabilities. In deeds and actions, the well-being of the individual is forefront. Caring and inclusion in decision making are indicative of this value.

Bringing community partners in discussions, partnering with other agencies and engaging community leaders to communicate and aid in advocating for COA, means it takes a village. Most importantly, listening to our staff and valuing their input and suggestions. The culture at COA is not top down. It is a round culture with continuous support for each other.

What's the most important lesson you learned from an older adult in your life?

Always greet people with a smile. You never know what they may be going through and your smile could be the needed spark to change their day.

Tell us about one of your role models or someone/thing that inspires you.

My parents were my first role models, because of their love for each other and the respect they showed to each other. They were family first and always made everyone feel welcomed. They were both very engaged in community events and their keen sense to want better by doing better is instilled in me. They always encouraged us to look out for the least of, left out, and provide hope and a hand to pull up.

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