



BOARD PROFILE James Cowan

Member since August 2018, representing Hamilton County. He serves on the board's Executive Committee and as chair of the SOAR Committee.

Cowan currently serves as assistant vice president of inclusion and growing markets at Constellation/AuguStar Financial, where he leads strategies related to target marketing, retention and corporate culture. His previous work at Ohio National Financial Services contributed significantly to increased diversity among women and minority agents and helped the company earn the CLIMB Award in 2022.

In addition to his corporate leadership, Cowan is passionate about nonprofit governance and community service. He has served on the boards of The HealthCare Connection and Mercy Neighborhood Ministries, supporting healthcare access and social services for local communities. His civic involvement also includes mentorship and volunteering to tutor students in Cincinnati Public Schools.

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

Council on Aging was a tremendous blessing for my parents and for me and my siblings. The agency was an important source of support and information during some very trying times. Following that experience, it was my honor to "give back" by serving on the COA Board. I also recognized the importance of increased diversity on the board, especially since COA serves a diverse group of clients.



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

One of the biggest challenges will be ensuring the agency is equipped from a resource and operational perspective to effectively serve the fast-growing population of older adults and boomers. This includes ensuring sufficient staffing, efficient processes, and state-of-the-art technology, etc. The challenges facing older adults include access to healthcare and long-term care, and these challenges are not going away.

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

I am most excited about COA's innovative approach to staying viable and serving its clients. COA's leadership is not afraid to think outside of the box and pursue new and different initiatives! My goal is to be a part of this think tank and to also provide perspective that represents the everyday struggles and goals of urban, older adults. I also want to contribute to the welcoming culture of our board with warmth and authenticity.

Thinking about your time on COA's board, what COA moment are you most proud of?

I am proud to be associated with COA and its many contributions to the lifestyle and wellness of older adults. I'm also proud to be a part of my committee's "reset" from the Development Committee to the SOAR Committee!

Which COA value speaks most to you and why?

Compassion. This should lie at the heart of everything we do. Also Innovation. At the end of the day, the organizations best positioned to win are those who can do and see things a little differently.

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

Never blame anyone else for your circumstances. Your life is ultimately shaped by YOUR decisions, YOUR choices and YOUR ability to be resilient and keep steppin'!

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

I am inspired by people who are both compassionate and confident, in that order. Based on that description, a couple of my key role models have been my parents and Jesus Christ.

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