

USA Swimming Announces Formation of Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council and Black Leadership in Aquatics Coalition

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – USA Swimming, the national governing body for swimming in the United States, is proud to announce the formation of two diverse leadership groups developed as part of a long-term action plan to provide expertise and strategic guidance to USA Swimming staff and swimming leaders regarding diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

The 22-member DEI Council is comprised of athletes, parents, coaches, volunteers, and non-members representing diverse races, ethnicities, abilities, and LGBTQ+ people that make up USA Swimming’s membership. Its purpose is to bring together a group of diverse individuals to consult, deliberate and provide strategic DEI feedback to USA Swimming. The Black Leadership in Aquatics Coalition, also known as Team BLAC, consists of former and current USA Swimming National Team athletes and is chaired by 2004 Olympic silver medalist Maritza McClendon. Team BLAC’s mission is to be the aquatics leaders of the Black voice and to impact the sport of swimming through exposure, resources, and mentorship.

“USA Swimming’s internal DEI team has been operating for more than a decade, focused on serving, supporting and highlighting under-represented swimming communities across the country,” USA Swimming Managing Director of Sport Development Joel Shinofield said. “We value having experienced and impassioned voices to help guide our efforts and very much look forward to working with all these individuals to further our initiatives.”

McClendon, the first Black woman to make a U.S. Olympic Swim team, added: “We are glad USA Swimming is taking the initiative to lean on, and hear from, its Black athletes as they tackle the need for actionable change to address why Black people continue to be underrepresented in the sport of swimming. While there has been a positive impact on the drowning statistics plaguing the Black communities, there has been a very slow change in the percentage of Black members in USA Swimming.”

The DEI Council will operate similarly to other USA Swimming National Committees, and appointees will serve one- to four-year terms. The council will also include representation from USA Swimming staff, and USA Swimming and USA Swimming Foundation's Boards of Directors. McClendon will sit on the DEI Council as Team BLAC's representative, and the targeted goal is to develop additional individual focused groups. An internal staff DEI group was also developed to focus on USA Swimming staff culture and education.

The lists of members are available only at:

DEI Council: <https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/diversity-inclusion/dei-councils/dei-council-final.pdf>

Team BLAC: https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/diversity-inclusion/dei-councils/team-blac_final.pdf

For more information on USA Swimming's DEI efforts, please visit <https://www.usaswimming.org/resource-center/diversity-equity-inclusion> or email inclusion@usaswimming.org.

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