



Jo Ann Hardesty, *Commissioner*
Michael Montoya, *Interim Director*
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To: All Civic Life Community Partners & Advisory Bodies
From: Civic Life Interim Director Michael Montoya

Monday, May 24, 2021

Dear Civic Life Community Partners & Advisory Bodies,

I am writing to let you know that on May 20, I accepted the position of interim director for the Office of Community & Civic. Commissioner-in-Charge Jo Ann Hardesty released a statement about this transition and shared, “The Office of Community and Civic Life will require what I believe will be a year of change transformation and healing. I believe Michael Montoya is the leader for the moment to help us navigate this difficult time – but that ultimately, we will come out of this work a stronger, more resilient, and more responsive bureau. I look forward to working with Michael during this time and to support him in the work ahead. Our community and our employees at Civic Life require us to rise to the challenge of this moment.”

There has been a lot said about our bureau in the past several weeks. However, what has overwhelmingly been left out of the narrative is the incredible work Civic Life does every day and the outstanding community partners we work with. Please know, that our bureau is dedicated to continuing to support you, and we hope that you feel the same way.

Background on my qualifications and approach

For the past 21 months, I humbly served as Civic Life’s strategy, innovation & performance manager. I would describe myself as a well-rounded and experienced community practitioner, manager, and scholar with more than 20 years of experience designing and implementing equity-based service programs and policies.

Prior to joining the City, I held academic appointments at the University of California – Irvine in the departments of Chicana/Latina Studies, Anthropology & Public Health, where I championed community-driven research and authentic community engagement. Before graduate school, I held an array of positions in the nonprofit sector working on housing, food insecurity, literacy and healthcare. As an engaged faculty member committed to making community, I worked with environmental justice organizations, hospital community benefits programs, neighborhood associations, universities, government departments, national and regional nonprofit organizations, school districts, and foundations working directly with planners, senior administrators, workforce developers, organizers, neighborhood leaders, educators and law enforcement.



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I describe myself as ridiculously realistic and hopelessly optimistic. There is so much good but hard work to do. I know this will not be easy, but we hope that our upcoming actions will model our dedication to the community in the coming weeks and months ahead.

I have confidence in the people within our bureau to demonstrate the human capacity to heal and grow. As we work to build upon our incredible core strengths in serving all Portlanders, I intend to harness the wisdom of those who have worked in and with Civic Life for years, while supporting the energies and ideas of those who more recently joined our team. I can think of no better organization than the Office of Community & Civic Life to dedicate my skills, integrity and expertise.

I know that many of you have reached out to our employees, and we wanted to share our attached letter to our employees that went out last week.

We are here to support you, and we appreciate your patience as we transition

We know this period of transition and healing will not be easy, but we hope that our actions will model our dedication to you in the coming weeks and months ahead.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael J. Montoya', with a stylized, overlapping loop structure.

Michael J. Montoya