



Dionne Joemah

Deputy General Counsel,
DC Department of Housing and Community Development



WHF Member Spotlight – October 2018

Dionne Joemah, Deputy General Counsel, District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development.

Hometown

Washingtonian (Prince George's County, Maryland)

Fun Fact

My daughter was recently featured in a chess documentary, "Queens in Training," technically making me a reality star as the filmmakers followed us in our daily routine.

Walk us through your journey in the financial services industry and how your career has evolved to your current position.

Currently, I serve as the Deputy General Counsel for the District of Columbia Department of Housing & Community Development. Previously, I served as the Land Acquisition & Development Administrator for Prince George's County, Maryland. In this role, I managed the acquisition, disposition, and lease management of county owned and leased properties. Prior to this position, I worked as an Attorney Consultant with Freddie Mac, negotiating and settling litigation, claims, and disputes involving Freddie Mac's single-family loan and real estate portfolios. Immediately preceding this position, I served as an attorney at a creditor right's firm, representing a client base of over 40 loan servicers. I also owned and managed a boutique law firm, handling residential and commercial real estate transactions.

What do you love most about what you do?

I love contributing to the mission of affordable housing, assisting with access to the American dream.

Hobby

I enjoy cooking for my family.

How long have you been a member of WHF?

I have been a member of WHF for 3 years.

Please describe your involvement with WHF.

I have been an active member of Women in Housing & Finance for three years. During this time, I have served as Membership Committee Chair and Vice-Chair of the Mentorship Subcommittee, creating and implementing the following programs: Building & Sustaining Careers in the Housing & Finance Industry: How to Move to the Next Level in Your Career (February 2018); How to Get Your Foot into the Housing & Finance Industry: Success Stories from Diverse Industry Leaders (October 2017); There is More to Law than Lawyering (January 2017); and CLE Overview / Mentorship Brown Bag (November 2016).

Individuals like Courtney Vaughan engaged me and encouraged me to become active in the organization. Under Courtney's leadership, I introduced the mentorship concept to the organization. As Vice Chair of the Mentorship Subcommittee, we organized two networking events providing career advice to members in a group mentoring environment. With this tremendous support, I led a diversity event at Howard University. Facilitated by Dr. Julianne Malveaux, pioneers of color in the industry discussed how to get your foot in the housing and finance industry. It is intrinsically rewarding to be a part of an organization that embraces diversity and supports women at all levels of their career.



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What have you gained from being a member?

As a member of WHF, I have gained access to a network of professionals dedicated to educating men and women on the issues of the day in housing and finance. The brown bag lunches and networking opportunities have provided opportunities for me to expand my knowledge base and network while also supporting the development of young professionals.

How do you make the best use of your day?

I embrace each day as a gift, making the most of every moment. I typically start my day reading an inspirational word or affirmation. This sets my mood and focus for the day, reminding me to stay away from distractions and focus on my goals. I typically draft a “things to do” list and map out my schedule to accomplish each item. As issues arise, I adjust my schedule accordingly. At the end of day, I review my accomplishments and prepare the next day’s schedule. To decompress, I end my evening with a walk through my neighborhood.

Who or what inspires you?

Young people inspire me. My children are my greatest inspiration. Watching their growth and commitment to be their best self is inspirational. I am inspired by change makers, those willing to change the world around them for the better.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

The best advice I ever received was to always share something when participating in a meeting. I’ve also been told to only share when you have something to say. The combined advice is the best I’ve ever received, when sharing in a meeting, also say something of value and never speak for the sake of speaking.

Who do you look up to the most and why?

My parents are the greatest influence on my life. Their dedication, diligence, love, and unwavering support has inspired me to make the most of my life while working to bring out the best in my children and the people around me.