

Creating Financial Security

**An Interview with Allison Green Johnson,
Senior Vice President, Chief Diversity Officer, and Head of Culture and Engagement, Lincoln Financial Group**

EDITORS' NOTE *In her current role, Allison Green Johnson is responsible for diversity and inclusion strategy and implementation, as well as leadership of employee engagement initiatives helping shape company culture. Throughout her career, she has held business operations, management consulting, organizational development and design, talent management, and diversity leadership positions of increasing responsibility at well-known companies, including Wyeth*



Allison Green Johnson

Pharmaceuticals, Vanguard, The Hay Group and State Farm. She has been frequently honored as a leader in diversity, both internally and externally, through various media outlets. She is currently involved with several Chief Diversity Officer roundtables and is a member of the World 50 Inclusion & Diversity Impact community, the i4cp Diversity Board of Directors, and the Board Development Committee for Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania. She has been involved as a leader, volunteer, mentor, member or contributor to community organizations nationally and in the Philadelphia region. She earned her BA degree in psychology from Spelman College and her MA in counseling psychology from Howard University.

COMPANY BRIEF *Lincoln Financial Group (lincolnfinancial.com) provides advice and solutions that help people take charge of their financial lives with confidence and optimism. Today, more than 17 million customers trust its retirement, insurance and wealth protection expertise to*

help address their lifestyle, savings and income goals, and guard against long-term care expenses. Headquartered in Radnor, Pennsylvania, Lincoln Financial Group is the marketing name for Lincoln National Corporation and its affiliates. The company had \$311 billion in end-of-period account values as of March 31, 2021. Lincoln Financial Group is a committed corporate citizen included on major sustainability indices including the Dow Jones Sustainability Index North America and FTSE4Good. Dedicated to diversity and

inclusion, the company earned perfect 100 percent scores on the Corporate Equality Index and the Disability Equality Index, and ranks among Forbes' Best Large Employers and Best Employers for Women, and Newsweek's Most Responsible Companies.

How do you describe Lincoln Financial Group's culture and how critical is culture to the success of the company?

A company's culture is crucial to the success of a company, especially now that the way we work and where we work has completely transformed compared to just 15 months ago. Current employees, as well as prospective employees, have more employment choices than ever before and they have easy online access to stats and inside information about what it's really like to work in a given organization.

Lincoln's amazing culture is one of the key reasons I joined the organization 11 years ago, and I hear this same reason again and again

across our organization. Our engagement scores are extraordinarily high, but that doesn't mean we get to rest on our laurels. We're constantly listening, learning, growing and evolving. If I could describe the "secret sauce" to Lincoln's unique culture, I'd say we're optimistic about the future, we know that trusted and collaborative relationships are important to achieving results, and we focus very deliberately and strategically on inclusion as a key driver to innovation. Our company's namesake and our country's 16th president, Abraham Lincoln, stood for integrity and I see us live that every day. No matter where you sit in the organization, we step up, we take responsibility and we do the right thing – for our customers, for our employees, for our shareholders and for our communities.

Will you provide an overview of Lincoln Financial Group's diversity and inclusion strategy?

At Lincoln, our diversity and inclusion mission is to create and sustain a culture where multiple perspectives, varied skill sets, creative insights, diverse backgrounds and abilities are valued and drive superior results. We work to deliver on this mission through a three-prong strategy where we aim to:

- Attract, develop, and retain the best and brightest talent, and drive increased innovation, creativity, and employee engagement in our workplace.
- Enhance, expand and create new relationships and grow our business in the marketplace.
- Position Lincoln Financial as a best place to work and a provider of choice in the community.

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How engrained is diversity and inclusion in Lincoln Financial Group’s culture and values?

Diversity and inclusion is an intrinsic part of the Lincoln culture – it is even one of our Leadership Expectations. We encourage all employees to leverage the resources we provide to educate themselves on various diversity topics, adopt inclusive behaviors, be an upstander for interactions that have gone off course, mitigate one’s unconscious bias and remain open-minded.

While diversity is the right thing to do, it is also a business imperative. What do you see as the impact of diversity on driving better business outcomes?

At Lincoln Financial Group, we believe diversity of thought, background, experience and people drive innovation, support our growth objectives and produce results that differentiate Lincoln in today’s marketplace. Diversity and inclusion is fundamental and essential to our ability to deliver on our promise to help customers secure their financial futures. An example of this is that we are noticing investors and customers are keeping an eye on Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) when it comes to the companies they invest in and support. Diversity is playing an increasing role in how these groups assess “Social” within ESG. As clients, customers, and even employment candidates become more diverse, they seek a diverse culture and want to work with diverse groups of people; therefore, they seek out companies that actively and openly champion diversity as a value and business principle.

How important is it for the diversity of Lincoln Financial Group’s workforce to mirror the diversity of the clients and communities it serves?

While it is extremely important for our workforce to mirror the diversity of the clients and communities we serve, we find that the ability to be relevant to all markets is important as well. Ideally, at Lincoln we want our workforce demographic to mirror the diverse demographics across this country. We strive to ensure that we as a company, a business and an employer understand and reflect the various cultures of this country in all that we do.

How valuable is it to have the commitment of Lincoln Financial Group’s C-suite and senior management in its diversity and inclusion efforts?

The commitment of our C-suite and senior management has been instrumental to our efforts. In September 2020, we shared our racial justice action plan to amplify our ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion and drive meaningful, measurable change. The plans were developed by a short-term board of directors committee, senior management, and our diversity and inclusion team along with input from our 11,000+ employees who have shared feedback and ideas through a variety of town halls, surveys and discussion forums on race. This plan is designed to ensure long-term, sustained action that supports racial equity and focuses on Lincoln’s business and talent practices, leadership compensation, and support for our communities. The commitment from our C-suite and

senior management was invaluable in this effort to ensure it was understood, embraced and accountability measures aligned to our desired outcomes.

What do you tell young, diverse talent about the opportunities that exist to grow and lead at Lincoln Financial Group?

I always lead with Lincoln’s Purpose – to help Americans create financial security. Everything we do is focused on one common goal – helping people. Above all, we are looking for talent that can identify with that Purpose on a personal level – envision and communicate how you, through your work, can help to advance that Purpose.

In recent years, opportunities to move up to and through senior leadership as a minority in the insurance industry has been a focus of several demographic studies and research efforts. To continue to be a leader in this industry, and to be competitive, we are learning from these studies and incorporating recommended practices in recruiting, talent development and retention to accelerate the pace of change for increasing diversity in our workplace.

Since announcing our racial justice action plan, we have added dedicated, diversity-focused recruiters and have begun broadening our reach and talent pipeline by elevating established partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and identifying new diverse channels and community partners. Additionally, we have launched several new development practices, programs and events aimed at increasing and supporting minority leadership within our organization. ●

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