

# Dept. of Administration: Virginia Hart Special Recognition and Diversity Award winners announced

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**Madison, Wis.** – The Department of Administration, Division of Personnel Management, the Virginia Hart Award Committee, and the Wisconsin State Council on Affirmative Action is pleased to announce the winners of the Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award and the Diversity Awards:

- Connie Chesnik, from the Department of Children and Families, was selected as the winner of the 2021 Virginia Hart Special Recognition Award. The annual award is given in honor of Virginia Hart, Wisconsin's first female cabinet member.
- The Department of Health Services will receive the 2021 Diversity Award for the creation of the Office of Health Equity (OHE) and the Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council (HEDI).
- The University of Wisconsin-Platteville will receive the 2021 Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award for the work of its Department of Campus Climate, to promotion of a diverse workforce through various actions and programs, including the facilitation of the Midwest Culturally Inclusive Conference.
- The Department of Children and Families will receive the Program Award for Outstanding Achievement for its Back to the Future Project in fostering an inclusive workplace through innovation and flexibility.
- Bianca Shaw, Director of the Office of Urban Development with the Department of Children and Families, is the recipient of the Outstanding Leadership Award for the work she has done in developing community and department relationships within Milwaukee, taking initiative and leadership roles in department diversity and inclusion initiatives, and relentlessly advocating for equity in her work and community.

- Dr. Pilar Melero, Professor of the University of Wisconsin Whitewater, is the recipient of the University Lifetime of Service Award, for dedicating her over 20-year career in education to educating and advocating for the LatinX, Chicano, Hispanic and LGBTQ+ communities, as well as serving as a mentor, resource, and ally to all students and staff around equity and gender issues.
- Administrative Law Judge Rose Ann Wasserman, of the Department of Workforce Development is the recipient of State Agency Lifetime of Service Award, for advancing diversity and equity throughout her 30-year career by delivering compassionate justice; and influencing countless others to pursue the same.

The awards ceremony will be held at the Wisconsin State Capitol Assembly Chambers on Friday, October 29, 2021, at 1:00 pm. The event is currently open to the public but subject to mask and attendance restrictions, and a [livestream will be available via Zoom](#).

Remarks will be given by the Governor Tony Evers, Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes, First Lady Kathy Evers, with special guest speakers Joaquín Altoro, Director of the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority and Marie Summers, Councilwoman for the Oneida Business Council.

For more information, please visit the [Division of Personnel Management Diversity Award from the State Council on Affirmative Action website](#).

For additional questions, please contact: Nicole Bailie with the Division of Personnel Management Bureau of Equity and Inclusion at [nicole.bailie@wisconsin.gov](mailto:nicole.bailie@wisconsin.gov) or 608-266-5709.