



★ Get unlimited access to the best of Medium for less than \$1/week. [Become a member](#)



Meet the Black Directors Leading the U.S. Digital Service



United States Digital Service · Following

Published in U.S. Digital Service · 7 min read · Feb 10, 2022



68



1



With all the talk about the lack of Black workers in tech and lonely Black leaders in corporate America, it's a bonafide wonder that nearly half of the leaders at the U.S. Digital Service — we call them Community of Practice Directors — are Black. Within a nine-person leadership team, Jordan Ginn, Kamari Guthrie, Sparkle Joy Meadows, and Florence Kasule provide ample Black representation.

Learn more about why they joined USDS, the work they do, and who's on their Black History Month playlist.



Jordan Ginn, Director of Talent Acquisition, aka a prolific email sender mixed with an Imposter Syndrome conquistador

What's your super-power? The only true corporate skill I have is doing what I say I'm going to do. I let my motor-mouth say ambitious things, and then I grind to back them up. Outside of work, I'm pretty unbeatable at Scrabble.

What's your favorite thing about USDS? There's no bottom line, no venture capital, no revenue targets. Our only shareholders are the American people. It can't be overstated how much that influences the mission and work culture.

What's your favorite thing about being Black at USDS? It's hard to answer because I'm not sure what *not* being Black at USDS is like. However, embedded in the question I think is what's great about having so many Black folks in leadership. My answer there is it's nice to not be alone.

What would you say to Black people considering applying to USDS?

I'm biased, but I can't think of a better job. We help populations that look like us and we actually have representation in leadership. I'll say it again — in leadership. I think we embody a true environment of bringing your whole self to work, and that has allowed a leadership team that is represented by myriad genders, races, religions, identity. Whatever your identity, there's a 99% chance that is represented in leadership. It feels good.

Do you have a favorite "hidden figure (a Black historical figure or "first" who doesn't get enough credit)?" My grandfather was in the military, fought in the Korean conflict, and by many accounts, was somewhat of a hero. He would sometimes talk about the racism he experienced in the Army, and it's hard for me to wrap my head around the resolve to serve a country that was hostile to you. It's mind-blowing to think about how many shared his story dating back to the American Revolution, and I'm humbled by their service.

Who's on your Black History Month playlist? Sam Cooke, Otis Redding, Bobby Womack...and Moneybagg Yo. I know that last one doesn't fit, but "Time Today" is my anthem.

There's more Jordan where this came from: Check out his "Why We Serve" [blog post](#).



Kamari Guthrie
DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNICATIONS

Kamari Guthrie, Director of Communications, aka a fixer, builder, with maybe a little “Olivia Pope and Associates” mixed in.

What's your super-power? I tell great stories.

What's the most interesting thing about your team? Our ability to contain all of the activity that happens at USDS and churn it out in story form to ensure people are compelled and committed to supporting or joining our work.

What's your favorite thing about USDS? The people.

What's your favorite thing about being Black at USDS?

The diverse leadership team and its commitment to equity, inclusion, and access. It's a great testament to why leadership teams should be diverse.

Who are your Black heroes, living or dead? Beyoncé and Blue Ivy Carter are my favorite Black heroes. This requires no explanation.

Why is Black history important to you? Black history is the cornerstone of American history, and it's an important aspect of our narrative and future.

Do you have a favorite “hidden figure (a Black historical figure or “first” who doesn’t get enough credit)?” Bayard Rustin!

Who’s on your Black History Month playlist? “Black Effect” by The Carters. “Before I Let Go” by Frankie Beverly and Maze covered by Beyoncé because... it’s required.



Sparkle Joy Meadows, Director of Product

What’s the most interesting thing about your position? I have the privilege of leading our entire Product Community of Practice. I love that we’re made up of a broad group of individuals and talents. Our team ranges from more “traditional” Product Managers focused on product delivery and strategy to Product people whose expertise is in navigating policy and bureaucracy and more. Having a mix of skill sets on our team gives us a lot of flexibility in the types of projects we can work on and increases the impact we have across government.

What’s your favorite thing about USDS? The work! We have an opportunity to work on projects and build products that impact the lives of every single human being living in the United States (and our territories). The work is

hard and requires both resiliency and creative problem solving, but being able to see the tangible impact our work has on people across this nation is a feeling like no other and is worth every moment we spend making it happen.

What would you say to Black people considering applying to USDS? We're not a place that is perfect, but we are actively confronting our diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility-related blind spots. And we're working to make USDS an environment where folks can come in and work on driven, but supportive teams while focusing on doing good work with massive impact. If you've been considering applying — just do it! We'd love to connect with you! I'd love for USDS to look more like the spectrum of people in our country and that only happens when you raise your hand and ask to get considered.

Why is Black history important to you?

Black history is our nation's history! I love that so much of Black history in this country is about breaking barriers and overcoming. I am so proud of the innumerable examples of grit, resilience, and creativity that have come before me and continue to inspire me.

What are you bringing to the USDS cookout? Pecan pie, homemade from my secret recipe, that I refuse to share outside of the family...unless I ever end up publishing the cookbook I've been working on!

Who's on your Black History Month playlist? Currently enjoying Black Violin!

If your personality was an emoji, which would it be? Just one!?! 🤪+😏

Wanna know more about Sparkle and her work at USDS: Check out her [“Why We Serve” blog post](#).

Florence Kasule

DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT
U.S. DIGITAL SERVICE



Florence Kasule, Director of Procurement, aka acquisition bureaucracy slayer

What's your super-power? Connecting with people! That and being comfortable in most environments I find myself in.

What's your favorite thing about being Black at USDS? Showing up to work as ME — a Black, immigrant woman who changed careers years ago and, through all sorts of twists and turns, now get to work with such amazing people.

What would you say to Black people considering applying to USDS?

Your government needs you and all of your talents and thoughts! We want an organization that reflects the diversity of this country and you're part of that. Just do it!

How has your Blackness given you an advantage in your work? As an acquisition strategist, I'm here first and foremost to listen with all of my senses in order to understand what the actual needs are. I'm not so sure it's an "advantage" *per se*, but as a minority woman, I find myself constantly thinking about the position of others. That has allowed me to empathize and consider other people's feelings, thoughts, ideas and positions through my work.

Who are your Black heroes, living or dead? The first would be my dad, Geoffrey Kasule, who is no longer with us physically. He is my greatest inspiration. He loved life fully and everyone who knew him could feel that and felt his joy whenever they met him. This, despite living through some pretty dramatic circumstances as a refugee escaping the brutality of the Idi Amin regime with a family. As a veteran, he believed in service and overall contributing his talents, thoughts, and humor to make his family, community, and this world shine a little brighter.

What are you bringing to the USDS cookout? I'd be bringing homemade mandazi, a Ugandan/East African desert that is similar to beignets...without the powdered sugar!

Who's on your Black History Month playlist? I'm into all kinds of music, so my running mix right now is all about Prince, James Brown, Lous and the Yakuza, Burna Boy, Silk Sonic, and Fela.



The best of technology.

The best of government.

And we want you.

We're looking for the most tenacious designers, software engineers, product managers, and more, who are committed to untangling, rewiring and redesigning critical government services. You'll join a team of the most talented technologists from across the private sector and government.

If you have questions regarding employment with the U.S. Digital Service, please contact us at usds@omb.eop.gov and visit usds.gov/apply.

[Join the U.S. Digital Service](#) | [Visit our Site](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GitHub](#) |