



# MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

## JULIE BROUSSARD BERKO



### About You

Julie Broussard Berko serves as the Director of Human Resources at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). With over 30 years of service, she is the proud recipient of the 2022 Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service. Julie's career has been committed to promoting employee well-being. With the Federal Aviation Administration, she developed their Work/Life program, along with a program for geriatric care management and HR concierge services. At the NIH, Julie led implementation of the NIH Leave Bank Program and Maxiflex schedule. She holds a Master of Public Administration from American University and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Howard University.

### What do you believe are the most critical qualities of an effective leader in the Federal Government?

The number one quality of an effective leader is integrity. It is my belief that at the end of the day, we made an oath to the constitution and not to a political leader or director of an agency. It is also important to be able to manage conflict and remain relatable to the people that work for and with you so that if something happens, they feel comfortable enough to talk to you about it.

### As a woman leader in the Federal Government, what is one piece of advice you would give to aspiring women who seek to attain senior leadership positions?

My advice would be to focus on relationship development and then management of those relationships over time. It is one thing to be an expert in a program, but if you want to lead you have to know how to align with the people in your network who can serve as champions to get others onboard when launching a new program or initiative.

When launching the NIH Leave Bank, I called on colleagues in our Institutes and Centers who ultimately helped share the value with others and even helped me garner the financial support needed to make the program a success. If I had tried to do this on my own, I may not have had the same outcome. This was particularly helpful when it came to financial support since there was no budget for this new program. Their support allowed the program to move forward despite holdbacks related to budget. If I may offer one additional piece of advice to aspiring female leaders, it is to understand the budget process in detail.

### What challenges have you faced on your path to senior leadership, and how did you overcome them?

One of the challenges I faced early on in my role as a Senior Leader was what felt like reverse age discrimination. When I transitioned into an leadership role, I jumped over my team leader to lead many who were older than me and most of my peers in leadership roles were retirement eligible. Unfortunately, my age was perceived as a barrier that overshadowed my experience. I worked hard to show my staff that I was more than surface level by doing my research and asking questions before making decisions that impacted programs and my staff. Over time this helped to build trust and confidence in my abilities to lead.

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