

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

A Service Sorority Founded in 1913

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BACKGROUND: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Mission and History

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide assistance and support through established programs in communities throughout the world. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority was founded on January 13, 1913 by twenty-two collegiate women at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

These young women wanted to use their collective strength to promote academic excellence; to provide scholarships; to provide support to the underserved; to educate and stimulate participation in the establishment of positive public policy; and to highlight issues and provide solutions for problems in their communities.

Programs

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's major programs are based upon the organization's Five-Point Programmatic Thrust, which consists of:

- Economic Development;
- Educational Development;
- International Awareness and Involvement;
- Physical and Mental Health; and
- Political Awareness and Involvement.

Some of the Sorority's national programs and initiatives include:

- **The Dr. Betty Shabazz Delta Academy**, an educational program which provides an opportunity for local chapters to collaborate or work independently with at-risk young women between the ages of 11 and 14;
- **Delta GEMS: Growing and Empowering Myself Successfully**, a program that helps at-risk young women between the ages of 14 and 18 to realize their dreams;
- **Delta Days in the Nation's Capital**, the Sorority's annual legislative conference;
- **Delta Days at the United Nations**, an annual forum held at the UN;
- **The Healthy Lifestyle Initiative- The Total Woman: Mind, Body and Spirit**, an effort to educate and facilitate lifestyle changes for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of Delta members and the communities they serve;
- **Financial Fortitude**, a program designed to help participants develop a blueprint to address all aspects of their personal finances;
- **Project ART: Actively Redefining Together**, is a collective effort of the Sorority's membership to support, nurture and uplift positive programming while rejecting demeaning and harmful images in all forms of entertainment and media; and
- **Water Tanks and Wells**, a collaboration with Water for Children Africa that provided financial support for the placement of 7 water tanks in the Machachos School District outside Nairobi, Kenya.

Organizational Structure

The organizational structure and governance of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority is invested in the Grand Chapter, which meets in National Convention biennially. Regional Conferences are held in the seven geographic regions of the organization during non-convention years. In the interim, the Executive Board, consisting of elected and appointed members, acts to establish and implement policies, as needed. A paid professional staff, under the leadership of the Executive Director, operates the National Headquarters office in Washington, D.C.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. conducts all of its activities in accordance with the rules that govern organizations whose tax status is 501 (c)(7).

Membership

A sisterhood of more than 200,000 predominately Black college educated women, the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority currently has over 900 chapters located in the United States, England, Japan (Tokyo and Okinawa), Germany, the Virgin Islands, Bermuda, the Bahamas and the Republic of Korea.

The members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority represent a unique segment of the nation's demographic profile. Delta women are movers and shakers--they hold political offices, own businesses and are influential in a range of fields from medicine to law to education. A recent survey of members showed that 97 percent of all Deltas are registered to vote; they are well-educated, earn competitive incomes and maintain positions of influence and respect within the greater community.

Alumnae Deltas comprise the largest portion (76 percent) of the membership, while collegiate Deltas comprise 24 percent of the membership. Most Deltas are employed in education as teachers, school administrators, counselors, professors, and higher education administrators. Other occupations frequently reported include management, social sciences, social work, medicine/health, law, engineering, architecture, the performing arts, information sciences, public administration (federal, state, and local levels), the judiciary, journalism, and religion.

A great number of the most astute professionals, entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, political leaders, educators and key influencers from around the world hold membership in Delta Sigma Theta. Some of the organization's most distinguished members include: former U.S. Secretary of Labor, The Honorable Alexis Herman; Attorney General Loretta Lynch; Congresswomen Marcia L. Fudge (D-OH), Joyce Beatty (D-OH), Yvette Clark (D-NY) and Brenda Lawrence (D-MI); and renowned journalists Gwen Ifill, Soledad O'Brien and Melissa Harris-Perry.