



**EEOC**  
TRAINING INSTITUTE

**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**  
**Chicago ★ Milwaukee ★ Minneapolis Offices**

# **Investigative Interviewing Techniques: General Principles, Adapting for Trauma and Mitigating Bias**

**September 14, 2021**

**11:30 am – 3:10 pm (CDT)**

**12:30 pm – 4:10 pm (EDT)**

## **AGENDA**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Presentation</b>
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11:00 am	Virtual Environment Opens
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11:30 am	<b>Opening Remarks</b>
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Julianne Bowman, District Director, EEOC Chicago District

11:40 am	<b>Get it Right the First Time: General Principles for Effective Investigative Interviews</b>
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Marina Guerra, Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Houston District Office

A good investigation is only as good as the person conducting it. Knowing the proper and varied investigative interviewing techniques and when to use them prevents us from filling the gaps in an investigation with our own opinions. This session discusses: 1) the different tools to use that can help or hurt the process; 2) when to ask certain questions; and 3) how to get the relevant information the first time.

12:40 pm	Break
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12:50 pm	<b>Trauma-Informed Interviewing: Striking a Balance Between Critical Thinking and Empathy</b>
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Nanisa Pereles, Enforcement Supervisor, EEOC Chicago District Office

Conducting investigations in today's workplaces requires a balance of critical thinking and empathy. It is essential that factfinders be prepared to encounter difficult, sensitive, or challenging scenarios. Often, a person subjected to trauma may have difficulty recalling events, may be afraid to share information, or may not appear to be credible. Because trauma affects everyone differently, there is no one-size-fits-all answer. This session provides practical tools for navigating those interactions while maintaining a trauma-informed mindset.

1:50 pm	Break
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2:00 pm **Leave the Bias at the Door: Self-Check, Mitigating Bias, and Best Practices in Workplace Investigations and Interviews**

Evangeline Hawthorne, Director, EEOC Tampa Field Office

This session discusses the different forms of implicit bias that may arise during an EEO investigation, from the planning stage to interviews, credibility assessments, and final investigation reports. Learn how to understand and examine your own implicit biases and ensure that investigations are conducted in a fair, objective, and impartial manner. You will leave this session with best practices, tips, and strategies to eliminate bias when conducting workplace investigations.

3:00 pm **Additional Questions and Closing Remarks**

Diane I. Smason, Deputy District Director, EEOC Chicago District Office

3:10 pm **Adjourn**

**REGISTRATION FEE: \$150.00**

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**CREDITS:**

HRCI – This program has been submitted to the HR Certification Institute for review.

SHRM – This program has been submitted for approval.

CLE – Seeking credits for IA, MN, ND, and WI only; not eligible for IL credits.

Federal Counselor or Investigator Refresher credits – pending approval.



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### PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

#### **Julianne Bowman, District Director, EEOC Chicago District Office**

Julianne Bowman was appointed District Director of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Chicago District in May 2015. As District Director, Ms. Bowman leads the District's operations, with primary oversight of private sector investigations, federal sector hearings, outreach and alternative dispute resolution programs for the Commission's Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis offices, which serve the states of Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota. Prior to this appointment, Ms. Bowman served as the Deputy District Director of the Chicago District for 15 years.

Ms. Bowman joined the Commission in 1984 as a trial attorney for the Chicago District Office. She was lead counsel on *EEOC, et. al v. AT&T Technologies, Inc.* (formerly Western Electric). The \$66 million settlement of that lawsuit in 1991, following summary judgment in favor of plaintiffs, was the largest settlement of a pregnancy discrimination suit in the history of the Commission.

In 1993, Ms. Bowman was promoted to Enforcement Manager, assuming management responsibility for various private sector operations, including oversight of the office's class-wide investigations. During her tenure as Enforcement Manager and Deputy, and now as the Director, Ms. Bowman has helped develop the Chicago District into one of the Commission's most accomplished Districts in the nation. Chicago continues to pursue its strategy of reaching out to assist employers in meeting their responsibilities under the law while pursuing a robust enforcement program designed to achieve noteworthy results which will encourage compliance by other employers.

Prior to joining the Commission, Ms. Bowman worked as a litigation associate for the Chicago law firm of Jenner & Block.

Ms. Bowman graduated with a B.A. from the University of Northern Iowa and received her J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law.



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### **Marina Guerra, Outreach and Education Coordinator, EEOC Houston District Office**

Marina Guerra is an Outreach and Education Coordinator with the EEOC Houston District office. Originally from Corpus Christi, Texas, Ms. Guerra attended Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and graduated with honors receiving a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. In 1999, shortly after graduating, Ms. Guerra moved to Houston and was hired with the EEOC through a Scholastic Achievement program. Ms. Guerra worked as an Investigator from 1999 through 2012, when she was asked to work a detail as the Acting Intake Supervisor. After a second detail, Ms. Guerra was promoted to a supervisory position in 2014, and held the position until 2020. In 2020, she was promoted to her current position.

Ms. Guerra is very passionate about the work she does and is especially honored to carry out the Mission of the EEOC daily. In addition to her duties of Outreach and Education Coordinator, Ms. Guerra also serves as the Houston District Office's representative for Diversity and Inclusion and facilitates the special emphasis programs, celebrations and morale events for the Houston District Office.



### **Evangeline Hawthorne, Director, EEOC Tampa Field Office**

Evangeline Hawthorne is the Director of the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Tampa Field Office. Ms. Hawthorne was appointed to her current position in October 2016. Prior to this appointment, Ms. Hawthorne served as the National Outreach Coordinator at the EEOC's headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Hawthorne has previously served in several capacities at the EEOC, which include performing duties as a Program Analyst in EEOC headquarters, a Senior Investigator in the EEOC Philadelphia District Office, an Enforcement Supervisor in the EEOC Baltimore Field Office, and the Acting Deputy Director for the EEOC Washington Field Office. Throughout Ms. Hawthorne's career with the Commission, she has been responsible for implementing, initiating, and carrying out a myriad of initiatives related to the EEOC's efforts to stop and remedy employment discrimination through its enforcement, outreach, education, and training programs.

Ms. Hawthorne received her master's degree in Public Administration from Wilmington University and her bachelor's degree in Political Science from Rutgers University. She has served on several boards and community organizations which reflect both her passion and steadfast commitment for civil rights.



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### **Nanisa S. Pereles, Supervisory Investigator, EEOC Chicago District Office**

Nanisa S. Pereles is a Supervisory Investigator at EEOC. During her tenure with EEOC, Ms. Pereles has investigated and supervised all types of employment discrimination cases. Ms. Pereles has trained and mentored EEO Investigators from coast to coast. In addition, she has been selected to train both internal and external customers on EEOC's statutes, she and has been part of national development teams for investigative training and compliance materials. Ms. Pereles has led teams of investigators for over a decade with a focus on partnership, empathy, and efficiency. Those efforts have led to strong results including \$3 million in relief for affected parties in a disability class case. Ms. Pereles is a Partnership for Public Service 2021 Leadership Cohort Member.

Prior to Ms. Pereles' work at EEOC, she was an Immigration Officer and a High School Teacher. Ms. Pereles' received a Bachelor of Science in Communications from Southwestern Oklahoma State University and a Master of Arts in Communications from Oklahoma State University.



### **Diane I. Smason, Deputy District Director, EEOC Chicago District Office**

Diane I. Smason started as a trial attorney with the Chicago District Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1998 and became a supervisor in 2004. In January 2020, she was promoted to Deputy Director of the Chicago District Office. While in the Legal Unit, she litigated a wide variety of matters, including class and systemic cases, under Title VII, the ADA, and the ADEA. Ms. Smason regularly speaks about the EEOC and all areas of federal employment discrimination law. Ms. Smason is actively involved in the American Bar Association Labor and Employment Law Section and is past Public Co-Chair of the Employment Rights and Responsibilities ("ERR") Committee and the Section's Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession Committee. Ms. Smason is also a Board Member of the Federal Bar Association, Chicago Chapter, and Fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers.

Prior to the EEOC, Ms. Smason was an associate at Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal in Chicago practicing labor and employment law and general commercial litigation. Ms. Smason also served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Bernard A. Friedman of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Ms. Smason attended the University of Michigan Law School and has a B.A. in English and political science from the University of Pennsylvania, where she graduated *magna cum laude*.