

Christelle N. Onwu (Biography)

With over 15 years of work experience in the government, nonprofit, and international sectors, Christelle N. Onwu has been recognized by City & State's NYC 40 Under 40 Rising Star class of 2021, the Assembly of the State of New York, the Public Advocate, New York State Comptroller's Office, Bronx Borough President's Office, and the New York City Council.

Christelle Onwu currently serves as the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officer/ director, language access; disability services facilitator & 55-a Coordinator; digital inclusion officer at the NYC Department of Probation. Before obtaining her new role, Christelle was the Advisor for African Diaspora Communities and a Diversity and Inclusion Officer with the New York City Commission on Human Rights. As Advisor, she served as the inaugural African Diaspora Advisor, policy advocate, and relationship manager with the Office of the Commissioner across a portfolio of 54 countries. She supervised the planning, coordination, and implementation of emerging policy issues and professional public-facing events on behalf of the Commission. She worked to uphold New York City's anti-discrimination law throughout the city. She also served as an Adjunct Lecturer for Columbia University. As a Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Christelle participated in the revamping of the City of New York's hiring and onboarding process through DCAS's transformation working group by reducing the "until filled" language on job postings to a three-week deadline and providing best practices for recruitment and retention practices for all city agencies.

As the EEO Director, Christelle guides managers, supervisors, and employees on EEO matters, takes part in the development and operation of a comprehensive EEO program, plans and ensures the dissemination of the City's EEO policy and information on employees' rights and responsibilities to employees, and monitors the agency's compliance with the City's EEO policy. Christelle conducts investigations on discrimination complaints throughout the agency. In her capacity as the Disability Services Facilitator and 55-a Coordinator for DOP, she reviews and processes reasonable accommodation requests, ensuring compliance with American with Disability Act (ADA) standards. Christelle works to create accessible environments across DOP offices citywide, including ensuring our website meets accessibility guidelines, so all employees can excel in an inclusive workplace. In these roles, she provides guidance to various units on incorporating accommodation language into our forward-facing events, reinforcing DOP's commitment to fostering a culture where everyone—regardless of ability—can work, thrive, and succeed.

Christelle's academic journey is equally impressive. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Humanities and Justice Studies at CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and her Master of Science in Social Work Policy at Columbia University School of Social Work. She was recently recognized as one of CUNY Alumni 50 Under 50 for her contributions to her field of work and has participated in several fellowships: Bridges New York Fellowship (2024); Council on Urban Professionals (2021); Coro New York Leadership Fellowship (ICLP) (2017).