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Southwest Airlines Continues Companywide Commitment Toward Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion

Airline shares progress on previously announced plans

DALLAS, Sept. 21, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) shared an update today with its Employees, Customers, and Partners on the progress the airline has made during the last year and its next steps within the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) roadmap. In September 2020, Southwest Airlines [announced Company goals](#) to strengthen and improve efforts to create more diverse, equitable, and inclusive job opportunities and candidate pipelines while championing a welcoming environment for all Employees.

"Summer 2020 was a season of learning for Southwest Airlines in many ways; it heightened our awareness of social injustice and initiated an increased focus on our own diversity and inclusion efforts. We started with evolving our existing Company Values around how we show up individually, how we treat each other, and how we work as a Team," said [Bob Jordan](#), Executive Vice and incoming CEO at Southwest Airlines. "We identified that the first step toward accomplishing these goals was concentrating on key areas such as diversifying Senior Leadership, enhancing diversity in hiring, providing mentorship and sponsorship opportunities, improving the retention and upward mobility of diverse talent, and training Leaders and Employees. In the past year, we have taken tangible steps to update the required infrastructure, processes, and practices to meet these objectives."

Today, the carrier is making steady progress in its processes to increase racial and gender diversity in Leadership. The Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Department formed an Executive Steering Committee to support the strategic direction of this progress. Additional strides include evolving the Company's talent acquisition processes by requiring diverse candidate pools, inclusion training for all hiring Leaders, and the creation of a Diversity Recruiting Center of Excellence (COE). Southwest Airlines is currently working with more than 188 community partners in support of its efforts to continue developing diverse and inclusive talent pipelines and expanding recruiting efforts. Southwest also recently launched a formal Sponsorship and Mentorship Program and is enhancing its existing Supplier Diversity Program.



Southwest launched a DEI Employee resource website, created an Allyship Guide, and introduced the ability for Employees to develop diversity-focused groups. The purpose of these initiatives is to empower Employees to explore, educate, and further connect in the DEI space.

In 2021, the airline received numerous DEI-focused awards including:

- Forbes, America's Best Employers for Diversity, 2021
- Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index, Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality, 2021
- Latino Leaders Magazine, 25 Best Companies for Latinos to Work, 2021
- Disability:IN Disability Equality Index, Best Place to Work for Disability Inclusion, 2021
- 50 Women on 50 Boards, Accelerating Women to Corporate Boards, 2021
- Victory Military Friendly, Military Friendly Employer-Gold; Military Friendly Supplier Diversity; Military Friendly Spouse Employer, 2021
- National Diversity Council, Power 50 Award honoring Linda Rutherford, Executive Vice President People & Communications, 2021

"We recognize that our work is not done. Our goal is to cultivate a diverse and inclusive experience for all to thrive," Jordan stated. "We will continue to fuel this ongoing momentum as we strive for sustainable and systemic change through consistent progress."

Future Vision

In addition to evolving its current initiatives, the DEI Department is partnering with the Corporate Strategy Team on a five-year plan to build a DEI enterprise strategy. Southwest's motivation is to continue being a healthy organization where Employees thrive, feel appreciated, valued, and have an authentic sense of belonging. The goal is to provide regular progress updates on the Company's commitments, share a plan of action, and announce a long-standing DEI vision later this year.

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In its 51st year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 54,000 Employees to a Customer base that topped 130 million Passengers in 2019. Southwest has a robust network of point-to-point service with a strong presence across top leisure and business markets. In peak travel seasons during 2019, Southwest operated more than 4,000 weekday departures among a network of 101 destinations in the United States and 10 additional countries. In 2020, the carrier added service to Hilo, Hawaii; Cozumel, Mexico; Miami; Palm Springs, Calif.; Steamboat Springs; and Montrose (Telluride), Colo. Thus far in 2021, Southwest has initiated service to Chicago (O'Hare) and Sarasota/Bradenton both on Feb. 14; Savannah/Hilton Head and Colorado Springs both on March 11; Houston (Bush) and Santa Barbara, Calif. both on April 12; Fresno, Calif. on April 25; Destin/Fort Walton Beach on May 6; Myrtle Beach, S.C. on May 23; Bozeman, Mont. on May 27; Jackson, Miss. on June 6; and Eugene, Ore. on Aug. 29. Southwest will begin service to Bellingham, Wash. on Nov. 7; and Syracuse on Nov. 14.

The carrier issued its [Southwest® Promise](#) in May 2020 to highlight new and round-the-clock efforts to support its Customers and Employees well-being and comfort. Among the changes are enhanced cleaning efforts at airports and onboard aircraft, along with a federal mandate requiring every person to wear a mask at all times throughout each flight. Additional details about the Southwest Promise are available at [Southwest.com/Promise](#).

Southwest coined [Transfarency®](#) to describe its purposed philosophy of treating Customers honestly and fairly, and low fares actually staying low. Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer bags fly free® to everyone (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply, some carriers offer free checked bags on select routes or in qualified circumstances). Southwest does not charge change fees, though fare differences might apply.

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