

Deborah Aubert Thomas

Deborah Aubert Thomas serves as the president and CEO of Philanthropy Ohio and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from over 29 years in the nonprofit and philanthropic sector. She is committed to leading and equipping Ohio philanthropy to be effective, powerful change agents in their communities.



Prior to her appointment as president and CEO in August 2019, Deborah served as vice president, programs & learning from 2014 – 2019, providing vision and oversight for all Philanthropy Ohio local, regional and statewide educational programs. In addition, she led the organization’s strategy to apply a diversity, equity and inclusion lens to examine and execute its learning and networking programs.

She previously served as director of grants and programs at the Princeton Area Community Foundation where she provided strategic leadership to implement a \$1 million annual competitive grantmaking program. She also designed and implemented educational programs for donors and nonprofits, including the development and launch of a giving circle for The Fund for Women and Girls utilizing a participatory grantmaking process.

During her career, Deborah has worked at: Girls Inc.; the Institute for Women’s Leadership at Rutgers University both teaching and in administration; and at Women & Philanthropy where she coordinated their diversity internship program. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York; a Master of Arts from the Steinhardt School of Education, New York University; and a Master of Science from the Milano Graduate School, New School University.

Deborah values her service on many boards and her role as a volunteer, currently serving on the board of directors for Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO) and recently on the board of the Women’s Fund of Central Ohio and national committees in philanthropy including the Equity Advisory Committee for GEO and the 2019 conference advisory committee for United Philanthropy Forum. She is a member of the Columbus chapter of Jack and Jill of America Inc., the parent affinity groups MOSAIC and SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) at Columbus Academy and the IDEA committee at Columbus School for Girls.

Deborah resides in Bexley, Ohio, with her husband L’Quentus Thomas and their two children. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, music, film, food, dancing and cycling.