



# The Difference We Make

DIX & EATON

Social Impact Report  
OCTOBER 2022



**Results that deliver. Relationships that last.**

That's been the Dix & Eaton way for seven decades. Our commitment to community engagement and social good dates to our founding in 1952 and has remained at the core of our purpose. We strive to make a difference in people's lives, their work and our communities. Dix & Eaton is guided by our culture of client service, partnership, colleague fulfillment, and diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEI&B). Our people are difference makers – with an unwavering commitment to community improvement, philanthropy and volunteerism. As we mark our 70th anniversary in 2022, this Social Impact Report celebrates our longstanding commitments and highlights our recent efforts to continue to create impact that benefits all our stakeholders.

**Social Impact at Dix & Eaton:**

# The Difference We Make

## About Dix & Eaton

Dix & Eaton is a strategic integrated communications firm specializing in sustainability/ESG communications, change management, marketing communications, media relations, investor relations and crisis communications. Working as trusted partners focused on driving results, Dix & Eaton combines deep experience, foresight and creativity to help clients realize the full power of communication and generate greater return on investment. Founded in 1952 and based in Cleveland since its founding, Dix & Eaton is 100 percent employee-owned and was twice named the nation's best midsize firm by the Holmes Report. We provide global reach through our membership in the Worldcom Public Relations Group, which consists of approximately 85 agencies serving clients in 49 countries around the world.



**“Our founders believed that success comes from building great relationships with clients and colleagues, caring for each other as individuals, taking the high road, and being honest about always doing what is right. That is a sacred, historical legacy we strive to uphold, but we’re also constantly looking forward to the ways Dix & Eaton can create future impact and foster a greater good for all our stakeholders.”**

– Chas Withers, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# 70 DIX & EATON

## 70 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR CLIENTS, COMMUNITIES AND COLLEAGUES

In 2022, we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of our founding by Mr. John Dix (left) and Mr. Henry Eaton (right).



### Our Social Impact Mindset – Insight from Our Co-founder Henry Eaton

Social impact, community engagement and economic development that benefit an entire community have long been priorities for Dix & Eaton. In fact, co-founder Henry Eaton quipped on more than one occasion that “our *pro bono* work is our fastest-growing practice” because of all the opportunities for influence and impact with nonprofit organizations and community-building projects. Mr. Eaton was inducted into the Business Hall of Fame of Cleveland in 1996. At his induction, he was celebrated as “a Cleveland treasure” and Dix & Eaton was recognized as “a leading corporate citizen.”

All of us at Dix & Eaton today owe a huge debt of gratitude to our co-founders – Henry Eaton and John Dix. They created a firm to become a community asset. They set the tone and built a legacy and commitments that continue to drive us forward. While this report is our current story, this is also their story.

## Collaborative Culture Drives Results and Relationships

Our passion at Dix & Eaton is to be an invaluable partner in all relationships – for our clients, in our communities and with our colleagues. We thrive on solving high-stakes challenges and believe that can be rewarding and fun with the right people at our side. As a 100 percent employee-owned firm with an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), our colleagues are deeply invested in our clients' success, which leads to the success of our firm. Every member of our team is trained and held to high standards to earn a “trusted advisor” position with colleagues and clients. That is when we are at our personal and professional best.

More than 50% of our staff has 20-plus years of experience, our client retention rate is over 95%, and our annual turnover rate is well under 10% over the last five years. The benefits of this stability and longevity are significant: strong, lasting relationships with clients, deeper connections among colleagues, multiple opportunities for growth and advancement, and a real connection to where and how we do business.

### RESULTS FROM OUR 2022 COLLEAGUE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY:

**91%** of colleagues say Dix & Eaton provides them with a good work-life balance and supports health and well-being

**94%** of colleagues say their ability to be considered for a promotion is equal whether working remotely or in the office

**90%** of colleagues say the D&E leadership team is effective in keeping everyone on staff up to date on firm performance, opportunities and challenges



## Dix & Eaton's Core Values

WE ARE

*passionately collaborative.*

WE ARE

*driven to make a difference.*

WE PROVIDE

*insight and think ahead.*



## How We Take Care of Our People

We want Dix & Eaton to maintain a culture where people thrive. That includes providing great benefits, opportunities to learn and grow, and flexibility to balance life in and out of their work.

Our people-centered culture focuses on five key areas:

### Supporting Health and Well-Being

We take care of our colleagues and their families with a strong set of benefits that we continue to expand and adapt as the needs of our colleagues change, including:

- Market-leading healthcare, dental, vision and insurance benefits
- Benefit plans for a variety of family structures
- Firm contribution to HSAs
- Firm-paid employee assistance program
- Benefits for identify theft protection, pet insurance, and pre-tax plans to help with childcare, parking and medical expenses

### Providing Competitive Pay and Incentives

We regularly benchmark our compensation and incentive pay against the industry. In addition, our ESOP provides a unique opportunity for colleague-owners to benefit from the overall success of the firm. Our pay and incentive offerings include:

- Competitive salary, bonuses and merit increases
- Hybrid work stipends
- ESOP participation
- Firm contribution to 401k participants
- Spot bonuses
- Service year awards
- "Outstanding Owners" recognition

### Promoting Development

We provide a wide variety of resources and opportunities both within Dix & Eaton and externally for colleagues to learn and grow, including:

- Participation in a performance management program that includes 360-degree feedback from and for colleagues
- Developmental partners and mentors
- Conferences and webinars
- Memberships in professional organizations
- Board and committee positions

### Supporting Work-Life Balance

Dix & Eaton provides flexibility and time away from the office when it's most needed, including through:

- Flexible schedules
- Hybrid and remote work
- Initial four weeks of PTO with additional days based on years of service
- 8 hours of service time off for volunteer opportunities
- Personal, maternity and parental leaves

### Enhancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

We are dedicated to building and maintaining an environment where people from all backgrounds feel – and are – welcomed, supported, appreciated and respected. For more information on our DEI&B efforts, see the sections that follow.

## A Culture Centered on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

Our commitment is to embed DEI&B principles into everything we do. We acknowledge that this requires ongoing effort and persistence, and we are measuring progress by three key indicators:

- **Build a more inclusive work environment.** We strive to maintain an environment where everyone can flourish and feels a sense of belonging.
- **Increase the diversity of our colleague population.** We deliberately expand our networks and searches to include qualified candidates beyond those we know personally.
- **Serve as a determined, progress-focused voice.** We start with listening, observing and actively attuning our capacity for empathy to address improvements in race relations, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

### Activating Our DEI&B Commitment

- Cross-functional DEI&B team, co-chaired by our President and our Controller
- Commitment statement, which is [posted on our website](#)
- Use of outside counsel for strategic support and training for leadership and all colleagues
- Unconscious bias and inclusion training, and individualized DEI&B learning paths for all colleagues
- Diversity-focused recruiting efforts
- Support for DEI&B-oriented community organizations and events
- Helping our clients and colleagues communicate about DEI&B issues and strategies



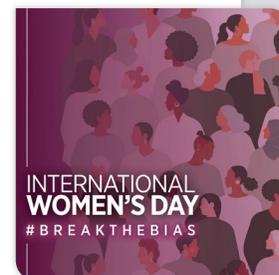
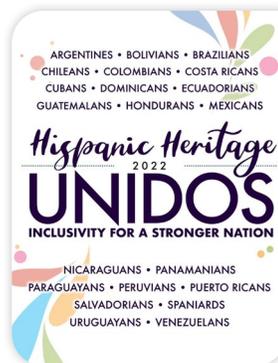
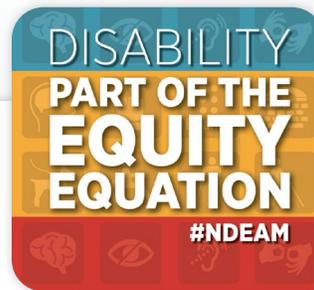
## DEI&B: The Difference We Are Making

**Support for Nonprofit Organizations:** Dix & Eaton colleagues are active in a wide variety of civic organizations that promote DEI&B in our communities. These include Cuyahoga County Immigration Legal Services Fund; DigitalC; The Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio; GCP (Greater Cleveland Partnership) Equity & Inclusion; Girls on the Run; In Counsel with Women; and Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP). See the full list of the organizations we support later in this report.

**The Cleveland Pledge:** Dix & Eaton was instrumental in the development and launch of The Cleveland Pledge, which declared racism a public health crisis and created a call to “heal, change and unite our City.” More than 120 organizations in Greater Cleveland signed on to The Pledge, which represented a commitment to taking

“immediate and sustained action” to address racial equity and inclusion. Dix & Eaton’s role included drafting and finalizing The Pledge, announcing it and developing a dedicated website, [theclevelandpledge.com](http://theclevelandpledge.com).

**Celebration Months:** In 2022, we have held eight “celebration month” recognitions for: Black History Month (February), Women’s History Month (March), Earth Day (April), Mental Health Awareness Month (May), Juneteenth and Pride Month (June), Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 – October 15), and National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October).



Led by members of our cross-functional DEI&B committee, monthly activities have included e-mail reminders with data, resources and useful links, guest speakers, blog posts on our website, and projects and fundraisers to support mission-driven organizations. We have posted content about each of these months on our social media accounts for current and new followers to read, and to consider for their own lives.

### Inclusive Approach to the Voices of Thought

**Leadership:** From the start of 2021 through September 2022, more than 25 colleagues have written blog posts for our website, enabling many D&E voices to be heard on topics ranging from social media strategy to public relations career development, from crisis preparedness and response to ESG and DEI&B reporting best practices. We have posted nine DEI&B-related blog articles since the start of 2021 – including a tutorial on choosing written and spoken words wisely to be more inclusive and equitable.

In the spirit of engaging diverse perspectives, Dix & Eaton has an inclusive approach to thought leadership. From the start of 2021 through September 2022, more than 25 D&E colleagues have written blog posts for our website. [Click here to read our blog posts](#) and hear from the many voices that compose the Dix & Eaton team.

## The Work We Do Makes a Difference

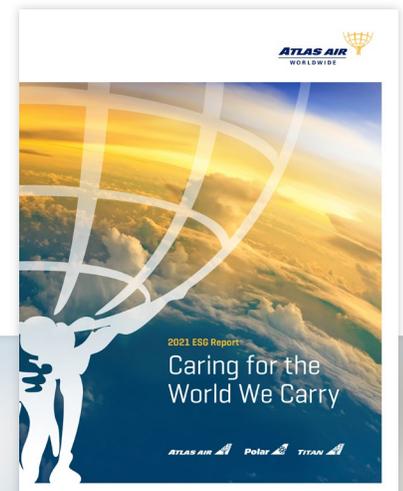
Approximately 50% of Dix & Eaton's work for clients has a direct connection to social impact. Our ESG/sustainability practice is the fastest-growing part of our business. Enlightened boards and management teams, stakeholder inquiries, supply chain challenges, and regulatory and legal pressures are all significant drivers of the ESG/sustainability agenda for a wide variety of organizations.

We also work with clients on DEI&B initiatives, local economic development programs, and community engagement campaigns, and with various nonprofit organizations that have social impact as part of their missions.

## ESG/Sustainability Strategy and Communications

Our ESG/sustainability practice works with more than two dozen organizations to help implement, elevate and communicate their commitments. Our advisory services enable organizations to address critical topics such as climate change, energy efficiency, DEI&B, human rights, community engagement, governance and ethics, and alignment with the U.N. Global Compact and U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.

We offer research and benchmarking, strategy, materiality assessment and stakeholder engagement, project management, content and graphic design. Our team completes approximately 20 ESG/sustainability reports per year for clients and a variety of other collateral materials in digital and PDF formats.



## Community-Building Organizations and Programs

For decades, Dix & Eaton has been a go-to resource for a wide variety of community-building organizations and programs, dating back to the early days of The Playhouse Square Foundation, Cleveland Tomorrow, Greater Cleveland Growth Association, the redevelopment of Tower City Center, and The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

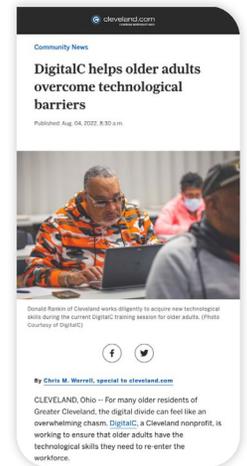
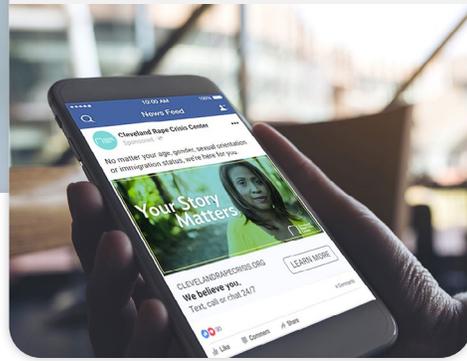
Over the years, we have proudly provided communications support for a wide variety of important community initiatives, including:

- Cleveland's hosting of the Republican National Convention and the NBA Finals both in 2016
- Transformation efforts of Cleveland City Schools
- Creation of a new downtown convention center
- Formation of the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission
- Introduction of Commission on Economic Inclusion
- Implementation of Sustainable Cleveland 2019 (a 10-year initiative that started in 2009).

We have also been involved in a variety of regional marketing and economic development groups, including the Gateway Project, Group Plan Commission for Downtown Cleveland, University Circle, Destination Cleveland, Cleveland Plus regional marketing and JobsOhio.

## Thought Leadership

In addition to our client work, Dix & Eaton provides a consistent thought leadership voice on social impact topics. Through the Dix & Eaton blog and our Brainfood series of presentations, we have addressed topics such as ESG/sustainability strategy, DEI&B, and change management at work in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. From the start of 2021 through September 2022, we have posted more than 20 blog articles on social impact, ESG and sustainability topics. [Click here to read our blog posts.](#)



Our current community-oriented client work includes:

- Supporting the **Greater Cleveland Partnership** and other organizations on economic development initiatives.
- Providing communications support to create awareness about the vital services of the **Cleveland Rape Crisis Center**.
- Telling the story of **DigitalC** as it strives to provide people living in unserved and underserved neighborhoods in the Cleveland area with equitable access to high-speed internet and the skills to use it.
- Embarking on a *pro bono* service project with **Esperanza**. The mission of Esperanza is to improve the academic achievement of Hispanics in Greater Cleveland by supporting students to graduate high school and promoting post-secondary educational attainment.

## Supporting Our Communities and Building a Better World

Dix & Eaton colleagues participate in dozens of local, regional and national nonprofit organizations, serving on boards and committees, attending special events, volunteering their time in community programs, participating in fundraising, and contributing financially.

As a firm, Dix & Eaton is proud to support and celebrate our colleagues' involvement by providing financial contributions and *pro bono* support to many of these organizations.

In addition to colleagues doing volunteer work on their own time, we provide all colleagues with 8 hours of service time off (STO) to support their organizations of choice. Our community engagement efforts draw their inspiration from our three core values:

***Passionately collaborative:*** We seek opportunities to work with others in the business, nonprofit and government sectors to create an outsized, positive impact.

***Driven to make a difference:*** When we join an organization, we participate actively and consistently to make a difference and create lasting impact.

***Provide insight and think ahead:*** We help organizations chart their vision and path forward by bringing our expertise in communications and stakeholder engagement to help them extend their impact and reach.

Approximately **300** hours of paid colleague time available for service time off (STO) every year

D&E and our colleagues support **50+** nonprofit organizations

Recorded **\$100,000+** of *pro bono* work in each of the last three years – 2020, 2021 and 2022

## D&E in Our Communities

Dix & Eaton is proud to support a wide variety of community and nonprofit organizations in Greater Cleveland, throughout Ohio, nationally and in areas where our clients are located. Here is a sampling of organizations that we support with pro bono work, board service, donations and volunteerism.

- Adtalem's Empower Scholarship Fund
- Alzheimer's Association, Northeast Ohio
- Business Volunteers Unlimited
- Children's Miracle Network Hospitals
- Cleveland 20/30 Club
- Cleveland Clinic's 4th Angel Mentoring Program
- Cleveland Food Bank
- Cleveland Leadership Center
- Community Life Collaborative
- Cuyahoga County Immigration Legal Services Fund
- DigitalC
- Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio
- Down Syndrome Association of Northeast Ohio
- Downtown Cleveland Alliance
- Engage! Cleveland
- Esperanza, Inc. (Cleveland)
- Food for the Hungry
- Girl Scouts of America
- Girls on the Run
- Greater Cleveland Partnership
- Greater Cleveland Sports Commission
- Group Plan Commission
- Holt International Children's Services
- Holy Name Hot Meal Program
- In Counsel with Women
- Jaimie's Bridge
- Junior Achievement USA
- Kids Meals Inc. of Houston



- LGBT Community Center Cleveland
- Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP)
- OhioGuidestone
- The Playhouse Square Foundation
- The Press Club of Cleveland
- The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northeast Ohio
- Towards Employment
- United Way of Greater Cleveland
- YMCA of Greater Cleveland

We invite you to visit their respective websites to see how you can also get involved to support these worthy organizations.

## Three Stories That Inspire All of Us to Have More Impact

In this section, we highlight three of the many nonprofit organizations in which our people participate, and that Dix & Eaton is pleased to support.

### Vincent Dorsey: Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP)

In January 2022, Vincent Dorsey, a Dix & Eaton senior account executive and lead writer on several of our sustainability and ESG reports for clients, joined the board of directors of Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP). LEAP is a nonprofit social services agency based in Cleveland's Ohio City neighborhood that is committed to advancing participation and equality in society for people with disabilities in Northeast Ohio. LEAP helps people with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, live independently in their own homes, participate in community life (including adaptive recreation), and find and maintain employment commensurate with their interests and talents.

In addition to serving on the full board, Vincent is a member of the board's Advocacy Committee and its Marketing and Fund Development Committee, for which he uses his communications expertise and lived experiences to advance the agency's mission and promote greater inclusion.

"As someone with a visible physical disability, I recognize the impact I can have on making our community more accessible and welcoming for all," says Vincent. "In addition to helping shape and promote LEAP's advocacy efforts, I believe my continued growth and success as a professional have the potential to inspire others living with a disability and to create opportunities for them to achieve their goals."

For more information on LEAP and how to support its mission, visit: <https://www.leapinfo.org>.





Jaimie's  
BRIDGE



### Brittany Mihaila: Jaimie's Bridge

Brittany Mihaila, a vice president who works in our ESG/sustainability, investor relations and change management practices, is a co-founder and board member of Jaimie's Bridge in the Rochester, New York, area. The organization focuses on addressing the fundamental needs of K-12 students, providing financial assistance to teachers in pursuit of advanced degrees, and awarding college scholarships and aid to students who aspire to build bridges for others.

Jaimie's Bridge was founded by friends and family of teacher Jaimie Magee Lesnick (pictured at bottom left), who passed away from a rare form of cancer in September 2020. Jaimie was Brittany's best friend and college roommate. By creating Jaimie's Bridge, Brittany and the other founding members of the organization found a way to honor Jaimie's legacy of helping her students overcome obstacles to success and build bridges to enable students to reach their highest potential.

"I started my career in finance, and I ended up in the PR and communications field after discovering my love for storytelling, and the impact that a powerful message can have. However, it wasn't until Jaimie's Bridge came into my life that I really felt like I had found THE story I was meant to tell," says Brittany. "I thank Jaimie every day for shining her light so bright, for giving us her remarkable story to tell, and for being our guiding force that enables us to continue to make the impact on her students that she so selflessly made, year after year."

The organization's signature projects include:

- **Jaimie Magee Lesnick College Scholarship**, which is awarded annually to students who live the values of Jaimie's Bridge, and who aspire to help build bridges for others.
- **Jaimie's Bridge Emergency Fund**, which provides financial assistance to students and families to help them purchase school supplies and warm clothing, and to teachers to purchase classroom resources and cover other unforeseen costs.
- **Community partnerships** with other organizations, corporations and individuals to maximize the organization's impact on student and teacher success.

For more information on Jaimie's Bridge and how to support its mission, visit: <https://www.jaimiesbridge.org/>.



### Ann Lentz: Community Life Collaborative

Ann Lentz, a senior vice president in our creative group, has always had a passion for nature and a love of harmony.

When her church, the Federated Church – United Church of Christ in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, was contemplating the sale of its underutilized 40-acre property, she and others in her church community saw and seized an opportunity. They conceived of a plan to assume responsibility for managing the property and create the Community Life Collaborative (CLC), which would be based on the site. Ann co-founded the nonprofit CLC in late 2019 and is currently serving as board president.

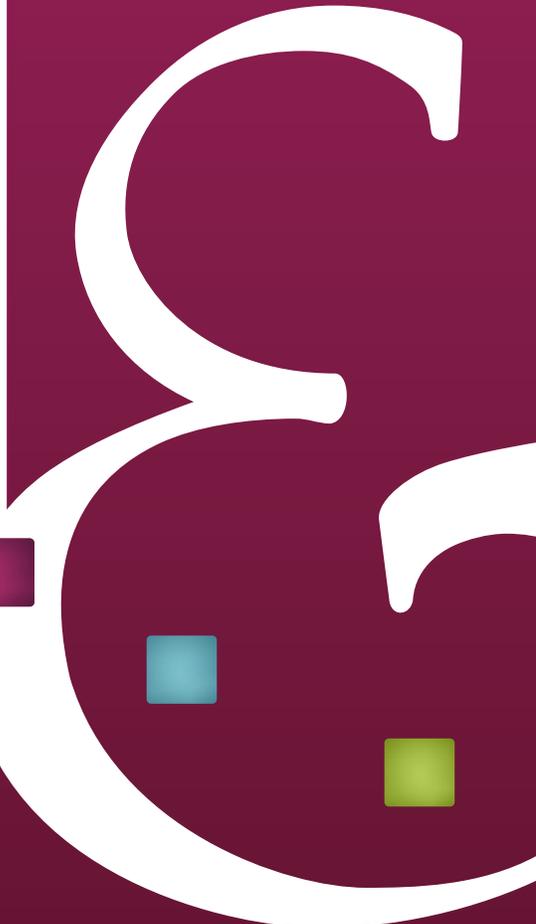
CLC’s mission is to engage communities around social and environmental justice issues by empowering untapped relationships, collaborations and understandings across boundaries. Despite forming just as the COVID-19 pandemic began to affect the U.S., the organization has blossomed with several key programs:

- The **Welcome Kettle Project** helped to resettle hundreds of Afghan refugees through a collaboration with Catholic Charities of Cleveland and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).
- CLC sponsored the **Freedom Speaker Series**, which featured stories from wrongly incarcerated people through a collaboration with the Ohio Innocence Project.
- CLC’s **Our Nature** presentation series focused on environmental racism, urban ecology and building resilient communities.

In addition to its programs, projects and forums, the CLC hopes to one day be a demonstration site for sustainable energy, including the use of solar and geothermal energy to power the 20,000-square-foot building on the property. Most of the mowed lawns are being converted to pollinator meadows featuring native plants and trees and will include a large community garden.

In addition to a sponsorship by Dix & Eaton, Ann worked with several D&E colleagues to create CLC’s logo and other brand identity materials.

For more information on CLC and how to support its mission, visit: <https://www.communitylifecollaborative.org/>.





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