

# Amazon Web Services manager files discrimination lawsuit

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Ashley Stewart 18 hours ago

- A Black manager at Amazon's cloud unit is suing over claims of racial and gender discrimination.
- The lawsuit alleges Amazon routinely pays and promotes Black employees less.
- It also accuses a former Amazon public-policy director of sexual harassment and assault.
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A Black senior manager at Amazon's cloud unit filed a lawsuit against the company and three current and former executives on Monday, alleging racial and gender discrimination and accusing a former Amazon public-policy director of sexual harassment and assault. You can read the full lawsuit below.

Charlotte Newman, an Amazon Web Services senior manager, alleged in a lawsuit filed in the US District Court for the District of Columbia that Amazon routinely paid and promoted Black employees less and fostered "shocking racial insensitivity" through a lack of sufficient workplace training and anti-discrimination policies. The suit also alleged managers displayed a dismissive attitude toward Black and female employees that left Newman vulnerable to sexual harassment and assault.

The lawsuit further alleged Black and female employees were underrepresented at Amazon because of racially and sexually discriminatory attitudes of company managers. Newman, for example, alleged that her former direct manager at AWS "used stereotypical racial tropes when criticizing her about how she speaks in meetings," including calling her "aggressive," "too direct," and "just scary."

Newman, a former advisor to US Sen. Cory Booker who joined Amazon in 2017, alleged she was hired at a lower level than merited by her qualifications, leading to lower pay and fewer stock awards — which she said increased her pay disparity from her peers as Amazon's stock price grew.

The complaint alleges that "Ms. Newman, along with other Black employees, therefore is being damaged by a baked-in disparity in pay (particularly in terms of equity) and seniority from which she likely can never catch up."

"Amazon works hard to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture, and these allegations do not reflect those efforts or our values. We do not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind and thoroughly investigate all claims and take appropriate action. We

are currently investigating the new allegations included in this lawsuit," a company spokesperson said.

Newman's attorney, Douglas Wigdor of Wigdor LLP, declined to comment beyond the contents of the complaint.

The tech industry overall has a bad track record when it comes to diversity and pay equity: Google last month reached a deal with the Department of Labor to pay nearly \$2.6 million in back wages over allegations that the company's pay and hiring practices disadvantaged women and Asian employees. Vox recently investigated Amazon's treatment of Black employees.

The lawsuit alleged Amazon routinely underpaid Black and female employees by giving them lower titles than their white and male counterparts. Very few Black employees occupy positions at high levels of the company, the lawsuit said, adding that Amazon's senior leadership team didn't have any Black executives until summer.

"This imbalance and segregation of roles speaks volumes about the low priority placed by the company on advancing and hiring Black employees into corporate roles, and how it makes the climb of even an excellent candidate and employee like Charlotte Newman that much more steep," the lawsuit said.

The suit alleged "dismissive attitudes" toward Black and female employees by management "left her vulnerable to sexual harassment and assault by a senior coworker" who "put his left hand under the table and pressed on Ms. Newman's lap, in proximity to her genitalia, then grabbed and groped the upper thigh of her right leg."

The complaint specifically cited comments made by Andy Jassy, the Amazon Web Services CEO recently named to succeed Jeff Bezos as CEO of the overall Amazon organization later this year. It called his tweets decrying police violence against Black Americans "superficial gestures." Improving workplace diversity is said to be a focus for Jassy.

"Just as Mr. Jassy expects better of the legal and political leaders of the United States, Ms. Newman and Amazon's employees expect better from their employer's executive and managerial leader," the complaint said.