

Governmentwide Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan

2016



Governmentwide Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan 2016

“Our Nation derives strength from the diversity of its population and from its commitment to equal opportunity for all. We are at our best when we draw on the talents of all parts of our society, and our greatest accomplishments are achieved when diverse perspectives are brought to bear to overcome our greatest challenges.”

— President Obama,
Executive Order 13583

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By law, the Federal Government's recruitment policies should "endeavor to achieve a workforce from all segments of society," while avoiding discrimination for or against any employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other prohibited basis. (5 U.S.C. 2301(b)(1), 2302(b)). As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal Government has an obligation to lead by example. Seeking to attain a diverse, qualified workforce is a cornerstone of the merit-based civil service.

Overview

The 2016 Government-wide Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan (the Plan) outlines the second phase of implementation of the President's 2011 Executive Order 13583, Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce (the Executive Order).

This Plan takes the lessons learned since the 2011 Government-wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan was issued and provides Federal agencies a path for continuing to create and foster a Federal workforce that includes and engages Federal employees and draws from all segments of society. The overarching strategy of this Plan is to increase the transparency of human capital processes (to the extent appropriate, in light of the obligation to protect certain test and examination materials, for example) throughout the Federal workplace as an approach to foster the inclusion that leads to the diversity of the workforce. The Plan provides a framework for the many initiatives that have been realized, the efforts that are currently underway, and the overarching strategy, offering a cohesive and comprehensive path forward. Together, Federal agencies will fully utilize policies, programs, and systems that support inclusive diversity through increasingly focused, innovative, and accelerated communication and learning strategies.

This Plan also includes a focus on data-driven decision-making through the strategic use of applicant flow data from past selection processes to help agencies plan recruitment for subsequent selection processes so as to foster a diversified applicant pool at all stages of the employee life-cycle, emphasize and identify potential areas of implicit bias, train agencies on the New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ), create a more interactive Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP), and intensify and accelerate agency communication techniques.

Of particular interest during this planning period will be continuing to address the underrepresentation in the Federal workforce (as compared to their proportion of the Civilian Labor Force) of people who identify themselves as Hispanic, enhancing the Government's ability to recruit effectively from all generations to foster continuity in knowledge, skills, and abilities as we experience the current retirement wave, finding ways to recruit more minorities and women to compete for positions designated as falling within the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), and finding ways to recruit more minorities and women to compete for positions in the Senior Executive Service (SES).

Background

During the implementation phase of the 2011 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (DISP), the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) conducted a series of Feedback Assistance Roundtables (FAR) with 57 departments and independent agencies. The FAR consisted of three phases to include conducting Human-Centered Design sessions in clusters of three agencies of like mission or size; conducting individual agency sessions with each agency's Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Director, and Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Director, where they exist; and gathering all 57 agencies at two forums to learn from successful practices and academia. The FAR process was designed to create opportunities to measure progress, learn of Government-wide initiatives, and receive guidance and feedback regarding the unique efforts occurring under each agency-specific Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Based on lessons learned during FARs, OPM, in collaboration with EEOC, conducted three Human-Centered Design sessions with agency experts in OPM's Innovation Lab to generate new ideas and design strategies and programs that will accelerate progress under the 2016 Government-wide Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan. As a result of these roundtable sessions and extensive consultation with inclusive diversity experts and academics, some insights came to light. The following insights were shared:

- More tools and training were needed to thoroughly analyze applicant flow data
- The employee life-cycle is full of potential adverse impacts resulting from implicit biases
- There is a stark under-utilization of social media for recruitment/outreach
- There is a general lack of urgency throughout the system to create inclusively diverse organizations
- There was no widely accepted method to measure or identify inclusion or inclusive behaviors within Federal Government agencies
- There was a lack of Inclusive Diversity (ID) professionals who were well versed, knowledgeable and skilled in change management
- There was not a robust and consistent way to measure Equal Opportunity (EO) progress outside of roundtables and representation tracking

New Initiative, New Strategies, New Ideas

In an effort to address the previously mentioned insights OPM/D&I office has undertaken many new initiatives and strategies. Some of the new initiatives include a more robust system to analyze Government-wide applicant flow data (post-selection), a more detailed and streamlined FEORP reporting process, a new approach to inclusion called the New IQ, a Government-wide Inclusive Diversity Dashboard, and an online virtual educational program that provides just-in-time learning for Federal employees involved in the disability arena.

The general strategy of the Plan involves fostering the diversity of the potential applicant pool throughout all stages of the employee life-cycle. This can be accomplished through targeted and strategic outreach and recruitment efforts that include the use of social media, as part of an overall and comprehensive recruitment plan. Further, we look to focus upon and raise awareness about the potential impact cognitive biases can have on all stages of the employee lifecycle process. These “decision or selection” stages can have a significant impact on the upward mobility and level of engagement Federal employees experience within the Federal workplace, and it is important to support a system where the impact of any such biases is minimized.

A key tactic to foster workforce engagement is the implementation of and emphasis on the sort of inclusion that causes members to feel valued and makes it more likely that they experience a sense of belonging. An emphasis on agencies improving (or at least sustaining, if already close to optimal) their Inclusion Index scores through the use of the New IQ approach and process is critical. The continued support of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and use of Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) provide the potential for a “critical mass” of employees to increase workplace inclusion.

The increased demand for innovation and efficiency present challenges to projecting and meeting future Federal human resources needs. Agencies can address these challenges with a diverse and inclusive workforce built by casting a broad net in the search for top talent, wherever it may be found. Agencies that, consistent with merit system principles, employ a workforce that draws from all corners of America – in filling positions from the Senior Executive Service (SES) to the entry level – will create a culture that fosters creativity and benefits from a greater return on investments in the workforce. A commitment to equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion is critical to accomplishing the Federal Government’s missions.

Creating a diverse Federal workforce that draws from all segments of society requires sustained commitment to ensuring a level playing field upon which applicants and employees may compete for opportunities within Government. Sustaining the highest levels of integrity and professionalism throughout new outreach and recruiting efforts is paramount to achieving the strategic vision set out in this plan.

Definitions of “Diversity” and “Inclusion” and “Inclusive Diversity”

We define workforce diversity as a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively.

We define inclusion as a set of behaviors (culture) that encourages employees to feel valued for their unique qualities and experience a sense of belonging.

We define inclusive diversity as a set of behaviors that promote collaboration amongst a diverse group.

Diversity and Inclusion Vision Statement

Our Strategic Vision is to serve as the Nation's model employer by leveraging diversity and fostering inclusion to deliver the best public service possible.

Goals:

Diversify the Federal Workforce Through Active Engagement of Leadership.

Federal agencies shall foster a diverse, high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of American society.

Include and Engage Everyone in the Workplace.

Federal agencies shall foster a culture that encourages employees to feel uniquely valued and experience a sense of belonging.

Optimize Inclusive Diversity Efforts Using Data-Driven Approaches.

Federal agencies shall continue to improve their inclusive diversity communication efforts and comply in a timely fashion with FEORP requirements.

Goal 1: Diversify the Federal Workforce through Active Engagement of Leadership

Agency leaders shall continue their efforts to attract, retain, and cultivate diverse leaders by frequently communicating, accounting for, and modeling inclusive diversity behaviors that attract and reflect the broad diversity of American society.

Rationale

According to recent research, **Leaders Leading the Way** is the single most effective method to successfully accomplish inclusive diversity efforts. Leaders are critical to inclusive diversity efforts because they can direct the necessary attention and resources (intensity) toward inclusive diversity programs and policies. Leaders can promote progress by communicating the importance of inclusive diversity by speaking, modeling, and accounting for it.

A diverse workforce has been positively associated with greater talent utilization, better employee retention, increased innovation and higher performance. To achieve this, leaders must emphasize the importance of inclusive diversity by integrating the value of inclusive diversity within all forms of agency communications to include social media channels, agency websites, and inter office correspondence. Possible effective communications should be cascaded from senior leadership through to first line supervision.

One strategy leadership could use to improve inclusive diversity efforts is to consider each major diversity effort through an assortment of possible innovation strategies. One promising strategy

utilized by many successful organizations is Human Centered Design, a problem solving process that OPM has championed. The HCD process can be applied to each inclusive diversity strategy, process, or program to generate original ideas and achieve positive results in an effective manner.

Priority 1.1: Leaders shall emphasize the importance of their inclusive diversity efforts by utilizing a wide range of communication strategies and tools that demonstrate their support for these initiatives. Specifically, leaders shall provide resources and support to identify and overcome the cognitive, motivational, and structural barriers that inhibit inclusive diversity efforts.

Priority 1.2: Leaders shall review the wide range of policies, programs, systems, and techniques currently in use and determine specific initiatives that should be enhanced and improved. The evaluation should include diversity, inclusion, and engagement elements in performance plans; employee resource groups; mentoring and coaching; and inclusive diversity training.

Priority 1.3: Leaders shall develop and Implement broad outreach strategies to attract leaders from diverse sources, to the organization, consistent with merit system principles, through strategic partnerships with affinity organizations, diverse postsecondary educational institutions, professional associations, and public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Goal 2: Include and Engage Everyone in the Workplace

Federal agencies shall intensify efforts to foster cultures that encourage employees to feel valued for their unique qualities and experience a sense of belonging, engagement, and connection to the mission of the agency.

Rationale

Of particular concern during this planning period is the continued underrepresentation, at least as compared to the Civilian Labor Force as a whole, of people who identify themselves as Hispanic, the challenge of recruiting qualified individuals across multiple generations into the Federal workforce to prepare for anticipated retirements, the continued difficulty in recruiting minorities and women to fill Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) designated positions and the continued difficulty in recruiting minorities and women to fill Senior Executive Service (SES) positions within the entire Federal Government Workforce. One critical driver of employee engagement is a strong inclusive culture founded upon the emphasis of inclusive behaviors.

To help agencies create an inclusive culture, OPM has developed a new strategy called the New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ). The New IQ successfully applied will enable agencies to better engage and more fully utilize the inherent talent of their respective workforce.

Priority 2.1: Foster a culture of inclusion and engagement by employing culture change strategies such as the New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ) Initiative and Diversity and Inclusion Dialogues, etc. Provide training and education on cultural competency, implicit bias awareness, and inclusion learning for all employees.

Priority 2.2: Assess, redesign, and reengineer organizational structures and business processes to promote teamwork, collaboration, cross-functional operations, and transparency; and to deconstruct organizational siloes that lead to exclusive cultures and to flawed decision-making.

Goal 3: Optimize Inclusive Diversity Efforts Using Data-Driven Approaches

Federal agencies shall intensify efforts to create and foster diverse, high-performing workforces, utilizing data-driven approaches and optimizing policies, processes, and programs to drive inclusive diversity efforts and accomplish agencies' missions.

Rationale

In this era of resource constraints, it is critical that agencies apply a more sophisticated inclusive diversity approach by using the latest data-driven techniques. By applying data-driven techniques agencies can better identify hard to recognize problems that limit diversity in their respective organizations. This more evidence-based approach could reduce the negative impact of implicit biases and promote better decision-making and talent utilization.

In an effort to optimize policy design and practices, agencies need to develop a cohesive structure to identify and manage the impact of any implicit biases throughout all levels of the employee lifecycle. This increased focus on addressing any implicit bias will enrich the data that agencies use to support inclusive diversity policy development and operations.

Priority 3.1: Create a diverse, high-performing workforce, utilizing data-driven approaches to recruitment, including analyzing applicant flow data; educating hiring managers; designing fair and effective recruitment and examining strategies for competitive examining and examining for the career SES that cast the broadest net possible and apply merit principles; utilizing applicable special hiring authorities (e.g., Schedule A authority for individuals with certain disabilities, veterans hiring authorities, etc.) as supplements to competitive hiring processes; partnering with diverse organizations and institutions to help recruitment draw from all segments of society, and generate cognitive diversity; and conducting a review of potential implicit biases within the organization.

Priority 3.2: Foster a diverse, high-performing workforce by utilizing data-driven approaches to promotion opportunities and career development, including analyzing applicant flow data; developing career enhancement opportunities; utilizing appropriate collaborative practices and social media technologies; and collaborating with Special Emphasis Program Managers, affinity groups, and employee resource groups.

Priority 3.3: Collect relevant performance data to establish a business case for diversity and inclusion for the agency; collaborate with other agencies and the Diversity and Inclusion in Government (DIG) Council to create models for analyzing performance metrics in correlation with diversity and inclusion metrics.



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Diversity and Inclusion

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