

How to Enhance Organizational Diversity



The Meaning of “Diverse”

- Workforce diversity may refer to a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. These include, but are not limited to, characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status and family structures.¹
- The term also may mean bringing together the perspectives of individuals of all backgrounds, life experiences, preferences and beliefs to create better outcomes for clients, workforce and community.²

Recruitment Guidelines

Seek talent who will:

- 1 Increase diversity of thought**
Non-homogeneous teams typically are smarter. They focus more on facts, and process those facts more carefully, and they are also more innovative.³
- 2 Help the organization achieve representation**
Build a leadership team that is representative of the population served.
A more diverse workforce helps the organization more effectively meet the needs of its diverse clients by learning from the organization’s own diversity.⁴
- 3 Champion the organizational change needed to achieve equity**
Top management support, diversity and responsibility for inclusion in operational functions are critical to the success of an organization’s diversity and inclusion initiative.⁵

Utilizing Performance Metrics

Presentation metrics

This is a way of measuring success in diversity recruitment, compared to simply maintaining “hiring” metrics. An effective approach is to set a goal to have at least 50 percent of the candidates for each position represent diverse populations. You may even wish to have a scaled point system that measures performance against this goal. For example: 5 points for more than 50 percent, 4 points for 40 to 50 percent, etc.⁶

“Two in the pool” effect

Research indicates that a female candidate’s chances of being hired are statistically zero if she is the only woman in a pool of four finalists. However, if there are two female candidates in the pool, the likelihood of a woman being

selected increases to 50 percent. One can apply this concept to the various dimensions of diversity. Strive to have at least two diverse candidates in the finalist pool.

Track outreach

When applicable:

- Verify that diversity and inclusion language has been inserted into job descriptions.
- Verify that diversity and inclusion language and images have been included in recruitment materials and communications.
- Keep a record of organizations that were contacted in order to generate candidates. (Indicate whether an organization has a mission to serve under-represented populations.)
- Track the number of employee referrals received by demographic group.
- Track the number of unique referral sources.

Measure process against whichever of the following steps formed part of the recruitment procedure

Percentage of all demographic groups:

- who inquired about the position
- who applied for the position
- who expressed interest in obtaining an informational interview
- who completed an informational interview
- who were offered a phone screen
- who completed a phone screen
- who were offered an interview
- who completed an interview

Process Elements for Ensuring Diversity

Preparation

- 1 Carefully word the job posting.**
 - a. Ensure that the job description is sensitive to implicit bias in language.⁷
 - b. Use language that helps attract and not turn off diverse candidates from applying for the opportunity. Language matters.
 - c. Include a non-numerical, qualitative goal on diversity and inclusion in the job description to demonstrate commitment. (For example: “Ensure that beneficiaries of our agency-funded programs are afforded equal opportunities, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, or disability. ...”)

- 2 **Identify the diversity needs.**
 - a. Determine what would be “culture *adds*” as opposed to “culture fits” to enhance organizational diversity.
 - b. Determine whether the workforce resembles the communities in which the organization operates.
 - c. Consider diversity in professional and lived experiences of candidates, including, but not limited to:
 - past agencies/organizations
 - past sectors
 - institution of higher education
 - “native to Pittsburgh” status
 - work experience in geographies outside of southwestern Pennsylvania
- 3 **Emphasize to recruiters those details about the organization and the job that will attract a more diverse candidate pool.**
- 4 **Make the recruitment process transparent, especially to the community and existing employees.**
- 5 **When using outside recruiters, seek those with a track record for engaging diverse candidates.**

The Applicant Pool

Strategies for outreach and attracting candidates

Recruit from varied sources.

- 1 **Talk to local organizations with community connections, including churches, cultural institutions and colleges.**
- 2 **Connect with professional associations relevant to diversity targets.**
- 3 **When appropriate, expand search to other counties and states.**

Attract diversity using diversity.

- 1 **Recruit from minority employees’ networks. Ask current employees for referrals, and encourage them to promote the opportunity to their networks.**
- 2 **Use images in recruitment materials that show diversity. Show existing workplace diversity or the diversity that the organization aspires to have.**

Set goals for the candidate pool and sufficiently build a pipeline for the interview pool.

- 1 **Apply the “get two in the pool” effect.⁸**

The Interview Pool

- 1 **Resist filling a leadership position until there is a diverse slate of candidates to select from.⁹**
- 2 **Focus on aligned core values. Strive for a “values fit” instead of a “cultural fit” to avoid unconscious bias.¹⁰**
 - a. Utilize behavioral questions to assess whether a candidate would thrive in the organization.
- 3 **Introduce diverse role models early in the interview process.**
 - a. Candidates want to come into an environment where they see others like themselves. Organizations have seen increased acceptance rates by diverse candidates when similar role models are introduced early in the interview process.¹¹
- 4 **Include diversity in the interview panel.**
 - a. Interviewing can be subjective, with people tending to hiring candidates like themselves. Add different perspectives to the panel and listen to the input.¹²

Making the Offer and Hiring

- Be honest and transparent about where the organization is on the topic of diversity and inclusion.
- Demonstrate a commitment to diversity from the top.
 - Provide opportunities for candidates to meet potential sponsors and leadership.¹³
- Provide examples of how past/current leaders have been successful in driving change toward equity in the work or organization.
- Connect the candidate to employees and/or community stakeholders who may have common interests, backgrounds or demographic factors such as gender, race or ethnicity.

The Conditions That Will Make This Initiative Work Well

- Commit to diversity in all practices. Signal the extent to which the organization values diversity.¹⁴
- Issue diversity and inclusion policy statements.
- Publicly report diversity numbers.
- Go beyond simply recruiting to enthuse candidates about the diversity objectives of the organization and how they can contribute to these.
- Explain the organization's diversity and inclusion actions and status with regard to its clients, workforce, organizational effectiveness (e.g., training) and provider community (e.g., contracts awarded to women in minority-owned businesses).
- Screen for candidates who demonstrate a willingness to take on diversity and inclusion as a personal initiative.
- Screen for candidates who:
 - Are culturally competent.
 - Understand the history and current events of social justice and equity.
 - Can articulate and diagnose the organization's social and equity challenges.
 - Understand how social challenges affect the organization's clients and workforce.
 - Have prior experience with leading organizational change related to diversity and inclusion.
 - Are familiar with successful workforce strategies.

Sample questions:¹⁵

- Have you ever seen any bias against someone from a background that wasn't typical in your organization? What did you do?
- How have you handled a situation in which a colleague was not accepting of another's background, values or experiences?

Note: "How to Enhance Organizational Diversity" was adapted from Allegheny County Department of Human Services' materials on workplace diversity.

Endnotes

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- 5 "Diversity & Inclusion Leadership." Chapter 5. diversitybestpractices.com
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