



INTERNAL POLICY BEST PRACTICES

Resources:

- Chron, Policies and Procedures to Support a Diverse Workforce
- Chron, Policies to Promote Diversity in the Workplace

Supporting a Diverse Workforce

- **Diversity Defined:** The definition of diversity has evolved throughout the past 30 years from addressing differences among people in the workforce according to race, sex and ethnicity to variables that define diversity today. Diversity now applies to the differences in work styles, generation, gender, veteran and disability status. Implementing policies and procedures requires an understanding of how diversity was previously defined, present-day interpretations of diversity and how future changes and trends in the workplace will affect diversity.
- **Forward Looking Policies:** Policies that support a diverse workforce change over time--what worked in the 1980s may not be effective today. During the time diversity addressed mere racial and ethnic differences, policies that encouraged hiring minorities were considered timely. Today, however, effective diversity programs are much broader. Consider incorporating into your business diversity policies special training and development opportunities for minorities and women who demonstrate aptitude for leadership positions. Another policy for strengthening support of a diverse workforce is creating affinity groups. Affinity groups are comprised of members of one or more groups of underrepresented workers that network and support one another's professional experiences and endeavors. Other policies include voluntary affirmative action plans, diversity training specifically designed for your industry and cultural enrichment events that increase employees' knowledge of diverse populations.
- **Consistency and Accountability:** Two key elements of success for policies and procedures that support a diverse workforce are consistent application and manager accountability. Ensure the policies you implement are consistently and equitably applied within your workplace. Implement management accountability for adhering to your company's policies and procedures that support your diverse workforce.

Policies to Promote Diversity in the Workplace

- **Training:** Diversity training teaches your staff how to benefit from its many diverse backgrounds. Ongoing diversity training will explain the legal implications of diversity in the workplace, such as discrimination and harassment, and it can teach your employees how to work together and benefit from each other's experiences and differences.
- **Hiring Policies:** Federal laws in the United States make it illegal to have a hiring process that discriminates against age, race, religion or ethnic background. Your company hiring policies should create an environment in which employees are hired based on their experience and not their race or gender. The human resources group should submit resumes and applications to departmental managers without names on them or any ethnic indicators so managers make their decisions on whom to interview based on the merit of each candidate's background.

Example of a an Employment Diversity statement from HR Council

Volunteer Calgary (VC) is committed to being a leader in supporting and valuing the diversity of the people, organizations and communities we serve.

Valuing diversity is recognizing and respecting human differences and similarities.

VC is committed to employment diversity with respect to all aspects of employment. All decisions regarding recruitment, hiring, promotion, compensation, employee development decisions such as training, and all other terms and conditions of employment, will be made without regard to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, physical and mental disability, age, ancestry or place of origin.

VC will make every reasonable effort to ensure that it is a representative employer of women and men, members of visible minority groups, people with disabilities and First Nations at all the organization's operations. To do this, VC will reach out to community organizations serving these groups to develop recruitment strategies. VC will endeavour, where feasible, to eliminate systemic barriers to advancement and/or redress the under-utilization of designated groups.

Everyone at VC has a role to play in supporting our commitment to diversity and employment equity. Each employee, regardless of position, is responsible for applying the VC's Employment Diversity Policy on an ongoing basis. Each employee is expected to treat all other employees with dignity and respect and in a fair and non-discriminatory manner in all employment related dealings.

- **Management:** The company can set a strong example for diversity in the workplace by having policies that make management accountable for promoting inclusion. Hire managers based on their accomplishments and show the staff that gender, age and ethnic background have nothing to do with succeeding at the company. Managers should be held accountable for any activity that may be contrary to promoting diversity in the workplace, such as favoring a staff member over the others or refusing to hire people who belong certain ethnic or religious groups, for example.
- **Input:** The company can determine if there is diversity and tolerance in the workplace by asking the employees. Ask employees to participate in monthly surveys to measure the effectiveness of diversity policies. Create a system in which employees can report anonymously any instances where diversity is being hampered so human resources staff can investigate. Stay in touch with the staff to find out if you are creating a diverse workplace.