



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

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WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2025

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Background

On August 23, 2018, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed Executive Order 187 establishing a coordinated government-wide initiative for promoting diversity and inclusion in the State workforce. Through Executive Order 187, the Office of Diversity and Management (later renamed the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Management) was established within New York State's Department of Civil Service.

On January 4, 2019, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Management published the *Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan* and the *Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Implementation Plan*. Taken together, these two plans outlined Statewide objectives for diversity and inclusion and provided State agencies with tactical guidance for establishing and maintaining standards to integrate diversity and inclusion practices into existing organizational and business activities.

- The ***Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*** identified four comprehensive Statewide objectives:
 1. Develop strategic leaders
 2. Recruit and retain talent
 3. Foster inclusive culture
 4. Deliver effective programs and services
- The ***Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Implementation Plan*** identified eight areas critical to success at the enterprise and agency levels:
 1. Informed and committed leadership
 2. Clearly articulated roles and responsibilities
 3. Continuous policy review and development
 4. Dedicated resources
 5. Collective accountability
 6. Education and Training
 7. Program plan integration
 8. Performance measures

Relying on these overarching principles and objectives, agencies were then charged with developing their own diversity and inclusion implementation plans to both identify and elaborate on the specific actions they would be taking to improve their connections with employees, residents, and the many diverse communities of the State.

Introduction

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is pleased to share the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan for Fiscal Years 2020-2025. This Plan outlines our priorities and goals as we continue to cultivate and promote a diverse and inclusive culture where employees feel welcomed and motivated to do their best.

These goals and priorities reflect our commitment to support DEC diversity programs; promote continuous learning and discussion of diversity and inclusion topics; recruit qualified candidates of different backgrounds, experiences, and talents; provide internal developmental opportunities; and assess what more we can do to nurture a supportive and inclusive work environment.

Commitment to equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion adds value to the DEC's mission by creating a culture where employees come together to innovate and resolve critical issues effecting the residents of New York State.

Having an employee base whose demographic makeup reflects the many unique faces, voices, and backgrounds of those we serve is also a crucial element in the pursuit of environmental justice and the empowerment of individuals to participate in environmental decisions that affect their lives.

Diversity and Inclusion – Defined

The Department has adopted New York State’s definition of “diversity” and “inclusion”.

Diversity is defined as referring “to a group of individuals with unique characteristics whose combined contributions support agencies in meeting and exceeding their organizational goals.”

Inclusion is defined as “a process that cultivates an environment that values collaboration, flexibility, and equity.”

Goals

In creating this plan, we have made an effort to align our diversity and inclusion goals with the Statewide goals set by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Management (ODIM). To that end, this next section will outline the priorities, strategies, and actions that accompany each of the eight critical success factors outlined in ODIM's *Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan*.

Critical Success Factor 1: Informed & Committed Leadership

Leadership demonstrates its commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion values and serves as a model for the Department as a whole.

Priority	Implementation Strategies	Actions
1.1 Demonstrate accountability, commitment, and involvement with regards to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.	1. Executive Leadership conveys the importance of diversity and inclusion in messaging and behaviors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add diversity and inclusion to the agenda for Regional & Division Director Meetings. • Model diversity and inclusion behaviors. • Ensure adequate training opportunities are available.
	2. Supervisors continuously collect input from employees on diversity and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify employee perceptions on diversity and inclusion through daily observation and discussion & then develop recommendations for future diversity and inclusion actions, which management can use to engage employees to expand efforts. • Develop and administer annual survey to collect staff input and make adjustments to this Plan and DEC diversity programs as appropriate.

Critical Success Factor 2: Clearly Articulated Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership provides clearly articulated guidance and support for diversity and inclusion initiatives. Supervisors are trained in diversity and inclusion awareness and proactively identify and resolve issues that hinder workplace diversity, respect, and inclusion. Employees serve as active participants in the development of Departmental priorities.

Priority	Implementation Strategies	Actions
1.1 Increase supervisory accountability for promoting and supporting DEC's diversity programs and objectives.	1. Include commitment to diversity and inclusion objectives in performance plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all supervisor performance programs include a diversity and inclusion element.
	2. Ensure new supervisors have timely access to diversity and inclusion learning materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate diversity and inclusion awareness information into Supervisory Training Programs.
	3. Identify and resolve issues and behaviors that hinder workplace diversity, respect, and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain an open dialogue with employees through surveys and/or focus groups to proactively identify workplace issues that may inhibit the retention of a diverse workforce. • Analyze attrition data to determine if disparities exist by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, veteran or other protected status and take immediate corrective action to address any biases that may exist. • Communicate and build awareness of the roles/responsibilities each employee has in support of the Department's diversity and inclusion initiatives. • Examine reward/recognition opportunities.

Critical Success Factor 3: Dedicated Resources

Resources are committed and allocated to sustain organizational change in the short and long-term.

Priority	Implementation Strategies	Actions
<p>1.1 Commit to change initiatives by allocating time and resources to relevant activities.</p>	<p>1. Determine specific financial and staff requirements necessary to support diversity and inclusion initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage all Department staff involved in the recruitment and hiring process to attend unconscious bias training to increase their awareness of it and reduce its negative effects. • Examine financial & staff resources to attend career fairs, development recruitment materials, participate in events.
	<p>2. Collaborate with other agencies/partners to increase resource capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Management on opportunities to share resources. • Work with other agencies, ODIM and the Division of Staffing Services on shared recruitment opportunities. • Engage in ongoing continuous improvement of diversity and inclusion initiatives through the exchange of information with partner agencies and through sharing of best practices. • Work with internal and external partners to promote the awareness of/encourage attendance at the monthly diversity celebrations coordinated by ODIM.

Critical Success Factor 4: Program Plan Implementation

Diversity and inclusion principles are incorporated into program planning and service offerings.

Priority	Implementation Strategies	Actions
<p>1.1 Assess the effectiveness and accessibility of Departmental programs and services.</p>	<p>1. Consider underrepresented groups and non-users in a comprehensive review of existing Departmental programs and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review programs to ensure there are no real or implied biases disadvantaging underrepresented groups and/or non-users from accessing Departmental programs/services; revise as appropriate. • Identify possible ways diversity and inclusion can positively address challenges in Departmental programming and incorporate these as solutions when making future programming plans.
<p>1.2 Develop relevant and meaningful messaging to reach a variety of audiences.</p>	<p>1. Develop marketing and web materials to be accessible and supportive of diversity and inclusion principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce marketing and web material for Departmental programming that is accessible for those with hearing and/or visual impairments and those with Limited English Proficiency. • Develop and use list of community outlets to expand outreach to target audiences. • Develop and/or expand relationships with community-based resources, including those serving individuals with disabilities and minority-affiliated institutions.

Critical Success Factor 5: Policy Review and Development

Existing policies are reviewed for compliance with legislative and Executive directives. Newly developed policies are free of any implicit/explicit biases and promote a consistent approach to decision-making.

Priority	Implementation Strategies	Actions
<p>1.1 Review policies and guidelines to remove unintentional barriers and support accessibility and fairness.</p>	<p>1. Conduct a comprehensive review of existing policies and identify those in need of revision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a master list of all the policies in need of revision and map out a timeline for their completion. • Identify the parties who will be responsible for updating each of the policies in need of revision. • Determine the process by which revised policies will be given final approval.
<p>1.2 Enhance recruitment policies and practices for selection, hiring, and retention.</p>	<p>1. Audit recruitment materials to ensure they are compliant with all applicable laws/regulations and foster confidence in the integrity of the hiring process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ interviewing techniques and scoring methodologies that promote fair and consistent treatment of all applicants and that foster the selection of the best qualified candidates. • Strengthen and broaden relationships with diversity groups, professional organizations that represent diverse populations, and universities with a diverse enrollment.

Critical Success Factor 6: Collective Accountability

Short and long-term goals are identified. Performance benchmarks are set and ongoing progress is reported on.

Priority	Implementation Strategies	Actions
<p>1.1 Conduct data analyses to develop meaningful diversity and inclusion data narratives and recommendations.</p>	<p>1. Analyze demographic data and share results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish annual performance goals that further enhance diversity and inclusion throughout the Department. • Report progress annually to ensure both transparency and accountability.
<p>1.2 Conduct ongoing succession planning discussions that address key-person dependency issues and identify ways to broaden necessary skill sets across the Department.</p>	<p>1. Use short and long-term approaches to meet diversity and inclusion objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop short and long-term diversity and inclusion objectives across all levels of the Department. • Facilitate the creation of internal and external “pipelines” for representative applicant pools, while maintaining alignment with Department of Civil Service requirements and guidelines.

Critical Success Factor 7: Performance Measures

Diversity and inclusion data is collected and reported upon. Leadership is regularly advised of progress made against annual performance goals as well as any specific challenges that are being faced.

Priority	Implementation Strategies	Actions
<p>1.1 Collect, analyze, monitor, and report on diversity and inclusion cultural data.</p>	<p>1. Establish baseline data for diversity and inclusion activities or elements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a baseline report to analyze historical employee demographic data and monitor trends in the composition of the employee base over time. • Create a baseline diversity and inclusion survey to obtain feedback from employees on their own experiences and perspectives on the Department's strengths and areas needing improvement.
<p>1.2 Monitor progress, address challenges, and identify areas deserving of recognition.</p>	<p>1. Report to leadership on progress and assessment results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally report to Department leadership progress against annual performance goals on a quarterly basis. • Regularly advise leadership of Department-wide successes and/or challenges; address specific complaints or grievances received; identify corrective actions taken; and provide names of individual employees or programs deserving special recognition.

Critical Success Factor 8: Education and Training

Training programs communicate expectations, discourage misunderstanding, and build awareness.

Priority	Implementation Strategies	Actions
<p>1.1 Consider underrepresented groups in training development.</p>	<p>1. Offer access to information and resources on workplace policy, accessibility, reasonable accommodation, unconscious bias, and cultural competence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise existing training curriculum to ensure material reflects the Department's diversity and inclusion framework and promotes critical thinking across diverse issues, experiences, and opportunities. • Develop and maintain a diversity and inclusion training program to promote awareness, encourage continuous learning, and facilitate discussion amongst the Department's employees.
<p>1.2 Provide employees with easy access to training and development opportunities.</p>	<p>1. Promote training and educational programs and encourage employee participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential training topics and ensure that internal publications, such as the monthly e-newsletter, include articles on diversity and inclusion to further promote the importance and success of diversity to the Department's mission. • Provide time for employees to attend trainings that support the integration of diversity and inclusion principles into Department business practices.

Conclusion

This plan lays out a course for achieving workforce diversity by recruiting from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants; cultivating workplace inclusion through collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and ensuring sustainability of our diversity and inclusion achievements by equipping leaders with the ability to manage diversity, measure results, and refine approaches on the basis of data. The plan details specific steps to enhance diversity and inclusion in the areas of leadership engagement, analytics and reporting, training, communications, strategic planning, and program enhancement.

Because the Department operates in a dynamic environment, though – one with a number of requirements and dependencies that could affect strategic priorities – the annual performance goals, measures, and targets may change over time. As priorities change, we will assess the strategic goals outlined in this plan and make alterations to them as may be required at that time.



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