



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
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STATE HUMAN RESOURCES

HR DIRECTIVE 20-02

Effective: January 20, 2020

Authorized: 

WHO: All state agencies and higher education institutions

WHAT: The directive requires state organizations to develop or update their workforce diversity plans

Background and importance of this work

When the Legislature approved Initiative 1000 in May 2019, State Human Resources and human resource leadership from general government and higher education formed the I-1000 HR work group. The goal was to provide recommendations to improve statewide alignment if the initiative became law.

Initiative 1000 went to a vote of the people as Referendum 88 in November 2019. It failed, preventing I-1000 from becoming law. Under current statute (including the state's obligations under I-200, the [Washington Law Against Discrimination](#) and [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act](#)) State HR and the I-1000 HR work group recommend agencies and higher education institutions take the steps set out below.

Our goal is to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in our state workforce and in the services we provide. Diversity, equity, and inclusion must be part of every decision so each decision can have a greater impact for the people of Washington state. The people we serve need to see themselves reflected in the state workforce. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion must be present and demonstrated each day to create fairer and more equitable outcomes. While history may have created inequalities in systems long ago, we are all part of the system now and it is our job to change it.

Details of required diversity plan

Agencies and higher education institutions shall immediately develop their own implementation plans, incorporating some or all of the recommendations below into the work of the organization. **Agencies and institutions shall prepare their plans and begin the work of implementation no later than May 1, 2020.** The plan must address the organization's approach in the following areas, and can include other actions that are being taken to improve diversity and inclusion in your organization:

1. Update or create workforce diversity, equity and inclusion policies and procedures.

Organizations unsure how to begin these efforts are encouraged to review [Executive Order 12-02](#) on Workforce Diversity and Inclusion, and reach out to State HR for support. A cross-agency DEI policy committee has developed a draft diversity, equity and inclusion model policy, among other workforce policies, that individual agencies can customize. These model policies are anticipated to be available on the State HR website by spring 2020. The publication of these workforce policies will be accompanied by another directive outlining specific requirements for implementation, including a presentation and certification process through the DEI policy committee. This is to ensure compliance and, more importantly, to foster a consistent work environment for our employees regardless of the employing agency.

2. Train all recruitment staff on recognizing and mitigating implicit bias.

If a state organization has not already done so, each organization shall develop a plan requiring hiring supervisors, managers, and designees to complete training before starting a new hiring process.

The training must address:

- a) Why implicit bias can be harmful to applicants, our agencies and institutions, and our communities, and
- b) Why a diverse and representative state workforce is beneficial for the people of Washington.

For ways to address implicit bias, review the Employer of Choice Committee publication on [Unconscious Bias in Hiring](#).

3. Develop and implement simple written standards for diversity data review.

At a minimum the written standards shall:

- Set workforce diversity goals based on this review.
- Incorporate standard agency or institutional demographic data reviews into hiring processes and strategic planning.
- Establish accountability mechanisms in hiring, including a regular review of objectives versus outcomes.

For recommendations on what data to review or where to find it, explore the [Measuring Diversity webpage from OFM State HR](#).

4. Include agency and institutional executive leaders in the diversity data review.

Leadership, HR/recruitment and DEI staff members must be at the table as part of the regular data review. This group shall meet quarterly when possible to assess progress toward objectives, discuss areas of concern and adjust tactics or approaches as needed. The review of recruitment and hiring data shall include a review of the:

- Required qualifications for job postings. Are the required qualifications truly necessary to be successful in the position? If not, review and make changes.
- Language in job postings. Are the postings written in a way that discourages certain groups of people from applying or believing that they could be successful? If so, make changes.
- Use of criminal background information. Does your agency's use of criminal background check information for hiring decisions comply with RCW 41.04.821? Does it support [Executive Order 16-05](#)? If not, review and make changes.
- Breaks in employment and participation in military service. Do your hiring processes and decisions create barriers for those who may have had breaks in employment or participated in military service, including being a member of the military reserves? If so, review and make changes.

5. Discuss opportunities to develop collaborative relationships between agencies and Washington state higher education institutions.

Brainstorm ways to bring graduates from Washington state colleges and universities into jobs or internships. Discuss creating university and college job boards that will build connections with different communities¹.

6. Review diversity details of your past, completed certified candidate pools or lists of interviewees.

- If the pools are not at least as diverse as the available workforce — or the student, customer or client population your agency works with — consult with State HR and your assigned counsel to explore appropriate options.
- Review the outcomes of completed recruitment processes. Are there steps or parts of your process where candidates from certain groups are being screened out? Consider root cause analysis to help address barriers. Solid data is key for this review – use your agency or institution’s online recruiting system to its fullest extent during your hiring processes to ensure high data fidelity. Where appropriate, use this information to consult with State HR and your assigned counsel to shape future workforce plans including outreach strategies to ensure you are reaching broader and more diverse pools of potential applicants.

Next steps

State HR looks forward to working with each of your organizations on this matter. We hope these recommendations, and the process of updating or creating your plans, help you identify opportunities for improvement and growth within your agencies and institutions. **Please be sure to submit a copy of your organization’s completed or updated plan to SHRPlanning@ofm.wa.gov by May 1, 2020.** We are available to work with your organization as you develop your plans and look forward to working with you thereafter.

¹ See recommendation in the Veteran Employment Plan to create a veteran talent pool within state government.