

Diversity in Action: Washoe County Diversity Strategic Plan 2005-2010

What is Diversity?

Diversity is the variety of differences based on age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, race, color, or national origin. *Diversity in Action* demonstrates the commitments of Washoe County to the inclusion of diverse attributes, backgrounds, cultures, and ideas brought by individuals in the workplace.

This Diversity Strategic Plan was created after review and compilation of many years worth of work by Washoe County Human Resources Department, other Department and Division Heads, and partners including Community-based organizations representing diversity, Ad-Hoc Diversity Committees, the Organizational Effectiveness Committee, and the Washoe County Employee Association.

Why a Diversity Plan?

Washoe County is committed to inclusion of diversity at all levels of the organization. Diversity adds significant value to our organization and enriches the community we serve. Through diversity we are able to deliver quality service to ALL customers, which is the fundamental reason Washoe County exists. A diverse workforce requires an inclusive environment built on a foundation of tolerance and respect for individual differences, values, and perspectives.

Washoe County recognizes that diversity is an important part of a healthy workforce and that it allows us to better relate to our constituents. Departments have been implementing inclusion programs and practices into their departmental culture for at least a decade, thus the title *Diversity In Action*. We would like to make those efforts known, while presenting specific strategies to expand our efforts to enhance inclusiveness and diversity at Washoe County.

“If you understand anything about diversity, it’s not about one group. It’s about people...finding talent and giving them opportunities.” **MGM-Mirage Diversity Training Director, Ondra Berry**

Diversity in Action is not a new concept, it is not an initiative, and it is not program.

Rather, *Diversity in Action* is the framework that links all of the pieces together: federal and state laws on equal employment and discrimination, the County Code of Conduct and Washoe County Values, as well as the Diversity Vision, Mission, Objectives, and Actions. We value diversity as a business philosophy beyond standalone programs, policies, and initiatives. The development of this strategically aligned diversity plan demonstrates that value.

Diversity as a Business Philosophy

*“Diversity is vital to success in today’s globalized society, for the private and public sector.” **Fortune magazine***

*“Diversity initiatives in hiring are not just good business, but essential for the future survival of major corporations,” **Nevada Business Journal***

Government, like business, provides and develops services tailored to meet the needs of the diverse community. Top business leaders know that leveraging diversity in the corporate world is crucial to their profitability, success, and competitive advantage. In the public sector, profitability is measured by efficient and effective delivery of services. Greater success will result from having varied viewpoints to identify and deliver those services. Washoe County will also gain a competitive advantage towards becoming the employer of choice.

Diversity provides a better business outcome all around by attracting a skilled, competent and diverse workforce that is representative of the community, and by ensuring our constituents are served in areas and ways that best meet their needs.

As a result of critical workforce shortages looming in many local government jobs, it is essential for us to look to non-traditional sectors just to meet our staffing requirements in mandated services.

Why is Diversity Relevant?

Washoe County’s Values Statement answers that best;

***“We strive to treat all people with equity, dignity, respect, and fairness.
We believe that our employees are our most valuable resource.
Each person’s contribution is essential to our success.”***

Diversity also has a clear linkage to the Board of County Commissioners’ adopted Code of Conduct: **Honesty, Respect, Duty to Serve the Public, Tolerance, Fairness, Courtesy, and Compliance**. Employees are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct, and implicitly, the inclusiveness of differences is part of that manner of conduct as are professionalism and ethics. Performance evaluations are performed annual on employees at all levels of the organizations.

Vision, Mission and Goals

The Future Vision

Our organization will have a diversity-friendly reputation, by demonstrating diversity in recruitment, selection, work environment, facilities, and operations for service delivery.

Mission

To provide equal employment opportunities for employees and applicants that is through merit-based selection of the qualified individuals in order to ensure a balanced workplace and progressive, responsive services.

Goals

- o Fulfill the commitments of the Equal Employment Opportunities Plan (EEO) and its measurable objectives, while providing a workplace that reflects diversity and aligns with the principles of equal employment opportunity.
- o Communicate our accomplishments and efforts towards inclusion to the community we serve, such as the overall percentage of increase in minority employees compared to previous years.
- o Promote and encourage the development of a more diverse representation on volunteer boards and commissions, and in the county workforce.
- o Foster a workplace culture of respect and inclusion with regard to age, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, disability, national origin, marital status, and veteran status through ongoing formal training, informal leadership, and environmental design.
- o Identify and plan to meet the differing needs of a changing demographic base.
- o Identify specific mechanisms, county structures, governance or activities that limit our efforts toward becoming a more inclusive organization and resolve those limitations accordingly.
- o Establish and maintain a clearinghouse of information and resources on issues of accessibility, equity, diversity, and services within the Washoe County organization.
- o Establish a training program for cultural competency that will identify barriers and strengthen the understanding of different cultures and abilities, helping to encourage inclusion.

What We Will Do

County Commission Commitment

- Provide the necessary financial and staff support needed for the effective implementation of the goals and actions identified in *Diversity in Action*.
- Strive to establish volunteer board and committee membership representative of the community.
- Pledge the cooperation of all county officers and employees to a climate embracing inclusiveness.

Management Commitment

- Provide leadership on diversity issues and communicate those to employees and the community.
- Establish measurable objectives upon which to evaluate County efforts and performance in diversifying the workforce.
- Eliminate and prevent occurrence of arbitrary, unnecessary, and artificial practices that adversely impact the County efforts towards inclusiveness.
- Ensure and promote a tolerant and respectful work environment through annual performance evaluations, and by addressing behaviors that are intolerant of diversity.

Employee Commitment

- Actively contribute to creating a tolerant and respectful work environment.
- Engage in recruitment and outreach efforts targeted at diverse populations.
- Support and participate in training and inclusive practices.
- Report any conduct that adversely impacts the County efforts towards inclusiveness.

Statutory Background on Diversity

It is the policy of Washoe County to be fair and impartial in recruitment, retention, examination, appointment, training, promotion, compensation, discipline and any other aspect of human resources administration. Washoe County has adopted administrative policies and procedures in compliance with applicable laws and statutes in order to produce fair and impartial, non-discriminatory decisions in all aspects of human resources.

Our Equal Employment Opportunity Plan states that the County will: 1) develop a Diversity Strategic Plan; 2) establish measurable objectives to evaluate efforts and performance in diversifying the county workforce; and 3) report annually to the Board of County Commissioners on measurable achievements focused on County diversity efforts, in order to ensure compliance with these legal mandates:

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the amendments such as the **1991 Civil Rights Act**, and the **Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972** - prohibits discrimination in employment practices, and requires employers to report employment statistics to the federal government. These Federal laws also require comparisons utilizing the available community labor statistics based on census data and race/ethnic categories.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1973 - protects workers ages 40 through 69 from discrimination.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the **1990 Americans with Disabilities Act** - both protect disabled persons from discrimination and require reasonable accommodations for otherwise qualified persons.

Executive Order 11246 of 1965 - As amended, prohibits discrimination by nonexempt government contractors or subcontractors on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin and requires that federal contractors implement affirmative action in employment for women and people of color. This executive order covers all contractors with \$10,000 or more in Federal Contracts.

The United States Department of Justice - mandates that employers with fifty or more employees, or, those that receive large grants must create an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. Washoe County's failure to comply may jeopardize funds: \$1.4 million in Dept. of Justice grants, and \$27 million in federal, state, other grants.

American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) Act - provides that State and local government provide to people with disabilities equal opportunity to benefit from State and local government programs, services, or activities.

Nevada Revised Statute 281.370 Actions concerning personnel to be based on merit and fitness; discrimination prohibited. - State, county or municipal departments, housing authorities, agencies, boards or appointing officers thereof shall not refuse to hire a person, discharge or bar any person from employment or discriminate against any person in compensation or in other terms or conditions of employment because of his race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation or disability, except when based upon a bona fide occupational qualification.

Nevada Revised Statute 245.213 Establishment of merit system, and 245.215 Regulations: Required provisions - The State of Nevada established a merit system with in which personnel actions, except for a limited number of unclassified appointments, are taken based upon merit and fitness.

Adverse Impact prohibited – The framework of employment discrimination has broadened into areas beyond the obvious forms of prejudice, rec-

ognizing that systems and processes that adversely impact a protected group is also considered discrimination. Thus, the federal government requires that governments and businesses alike must root out any forms of discrimination whether blatant or inherent in their systems, and provided procedures through the **1978 Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures** to perform adverse impact analysis, measure the technical standards for validity, fairness, and reliability.

The Fair Labor Standards Act - provides for minimum standards for both wages and overtime entitlement, denotes administrative procedures by which covered work time must be compensated, and exempts specified employees or groups of employees from certain provisions.

Equal Pay Act of 1963 - as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended, prohibits sex-based wage discrimination between men and women in the same establishment and do the same job.

Family and Medical Leave Act - provides unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees, both male and female, in order to care for their families or themselves for specified family and medical conditions.



Washoe County Human Resources

Mailing Address: PO Box 1130, Reno, NV 89520-0027 * Physical Address: 1001 E. Ninth St, Building A, Suite 220 *
www.washoecounty.us/humanresources

Washoe County employment benefits

Paid Holidays & Vacations

Sick Leave

Longevity Pay

Merit Increases

Excellent Insurance coverage

Tuition Reimbursement

Employee Assistance Program

Professional Development Courses and Individual Development Plans

For the **most current jobs** available check the Human Resources Department website:

http://www.washoecounty.us/humanresources/Jobs/JobsMain1.php~color=grey&text_version=

For more Washoe County employment information, contact the Employment Hotline at 775-328-2091.

Washoe County is an equal opportunity employer. The American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides that State and local government provide to people with disabilities equal opportunity to benefit from State and local government programs, services, or activities. If you need assistance in accessing Washoe County programs, services or activities, please contact the ADA representative, or Human Resources Director (328-2081).

The Board approved the EEOP in June 2005 including the updated utilization analysis using the 2000 census data and adopted as part of the **EEOP five significant diversity efforts over the next 12 months:**

1. Development of a budget to support the implementation of a Diversity Program including staff resources.
2. Development of a comprehensive Diversity Strategic Plan to guide Washoe County and department specific efforts to help bring about multicultural transformation at Washoe County.
3. Implementation of a foundational training course to develop a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity.
4. Identification of recruitment strategies on a case-by-case basis to focus on areas of under representation with the intent of diversifying the workplace including County leadership and management.

Establishment of measurable objectives upon which to evaluate County efforts and performance in diversifying the workforce.

WASHOE COUNTY ACTION PLAN 2005-2006

ASSESSMENT ACTION STEPS	WHO	WHEN
Compile and summarize Workforce Statistics annually by department with breakdowns of race, gender, and job classifications; compare those statistics to previous years; and assist departments in establishing measurable goals to improve.	Human Resources Staff	5/2005 (Completed)
Update County EEOP annually reflecting the Community Labor Statistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a Utilization Analysis of Washoe County’s workforce comparing it to the Community Labor Statistics. • Identify underutilization of specific categories • Recommend the area where increased efforts are needed. 	Human Resources Manager, Human Resources Analysts	5/2005 (Completed)
RECRUITMENT & SELECTION ACTION STEPS		
Recommend steps to achieve the inclusion objectives annually for department heads specific to job class.	Human Resources Director	5/2005 (Completed)
Annually analyze recruitment and promotion strategies per department to determine the impact of diversity efforts to attract and hire in the underutilized categories.	Human Resources Analysts and Department Leadership	Ongoing
Quarterly, publicize open positions to, seek advice from, and network with community-based organizations that represent diversity. Outreach efforts might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting diversity through advertising in newspapers, radio, television and on the employment hotline • Advertise employment opportunities on the websites of community organizations • Participating in activities with community organizations • Network at diverse organizational luncheons • Outreach to schools • Celebrating disabilities month • Celebrating a different cultures each month 	BCC, County leadership, Human Resources Department.	Ongoing
TRAINING & EDUCATION ACTION STEPS		
Survey departments’ diversity initiatives, programs, and practices, every three to five years, summarize and share these ideas to be used cross-departmentally and with the community.	Human Resources staff	2006
Develop inclusion-diversity training modules, and implement annually. Ensure employees are aware they can report intolerant behavior or comments.	Workforce Development Manager	Ongoing
Review and update policies, practices, and programs necessary to achieve an inclusive culture in the organization as needed.	BCC, County Leadership	Ongoing

For more information and specific objectives see the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan (EEOP) located on our website at <http://www.co.washoe.nv.us/humanresources/Policies/PoliciesMain.htm>.