

# **Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2011**

Our Nation derives strength from the diversity of its population and from its commitment to equal opportunity for all. We are at our best when we draw on the talents of all parts of our society, and our greatest accomplishments are achieved when diverse perspectives are brought to bear to overcome our greatest challenges.

— President Obama,  
Executive Order 13583

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## Overview

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This Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (Plan) outlines the implementation of the President's Executive Order 13583 on Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce (the Executive order). This document incorporates recommendations from stakeholders with expertise in the areas of diversity and inclusion, equal employment opportunity, and organizational change.

The Plan provides a shared direction, encourages commitment, and creates alignment so agencies can approach their workplace diversity and inclusion efforts in a coordinated, collaborative, and integrated manner. Three key goals provide a path for successful agency diversity and inclusion efforts: workforce diversity, workplace inclusion, and sustainability.

### Background

The Executive order directs executive departments and agencies (agencies) to develop and implement a more comprehensive, integrated, and strategic focus on diversity and inclusion as a key component of their human resources strategies. This approach should include a continuing effort to identify and adopt best practices to promote diversity and inclusion and to identify and remove any barriers to equal employment opportunity, consistent with merit system principles and applicable law.

A commitment to equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion is critical to accomplishing the Federal government's missions. By law, the Federal government's recruitment policies should "endeavor to achieve a work force from all segments of society," while avoiding discrimination for or against any employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other prohibited basis. (5 U.S.C. 2301(b)(1), 2302(b)). As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal government has an obligation to lead by example. Seeking to attain a diverse, qualified workforce is a cornerstone of the merit-based civil service.

In order to cultivate high performing organizations for the 21st century, the Federal government must tap into the rich resources of our global community and ensure fairness and justice in the workplace. To accomplish this, we define diversity broadly, including, but not limited to, the legally protected categories. Diversity encompasses all that makes us unique, including the diversity of thought and perspective that accompanies our identity. Only then can we realize the full performance potential and harness the innovation that diversity offers. This is more than a legal or moral imperative, it is a business imperative for public service.

The difficult budget environment and the increased demand for innovation and efficiency present challenges to projecting and meeting future Federal human resources needs. Agencies can address these challenges with a diverse and inclusive workforce built by casting a broad net in the search for top talent, wherever it may be found. Agencies that

employ a workforce that draws from all corners of America – in filling positions from the Senior Executive Service (SES) to the entry level - will create a culture that fosters creativity and benefits from a greater return on investments in the workforce.

Moreover, research has demonstrated that, while organizations may have diversity in their midst, employees may not perceive that their social identities are appreciated and included in the workplace. For this reason, building inclusive workplaces ensures that all employees feel included, connected, and engaged.

A comprehensive strategic human capital plan is critical to the ability of all Federal agencies to carry out assigned missions and properly manage their diverse workforces. An important dimension of each agency's human capital plan is the ability to identify and close current and emerging skill gaps thereby enabling the agency to carry out its mission more cost-effectively. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management is working with the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council and agencies to assess current and emerging skill gaps and develop strategies to close skill gaps in mission-critical occupations and skills areas that have the greatest impact on Government-Wide, and agency-specific, performance. The desired outcomes of this effort are: (1) increased proficiency levels in targeted skills areas through training, and (2) institutionalized processes for identifying and addressing skills gaps (Government-wide and agency-specific).

From 2008 to 2010, a study of hiring trends across Federal agencies revealed that information technology (IT) and cyber security professionals, nurses, contract and acquisition specialists, border patrol agents, and program analysts were among the top 15 most-hired positions within government. In each of these fields, research shows that recruiting with an emphasis on cultural, experiential, and cognitive diversity will improve agencies' prospects of having a workforce that is capable of addressing increasingly complex challenges more efficiently. Beyond traditional measures of diversity, seeking individuals with varying degree types; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) backgrounds; and professional experience will also benefit agencies and offices Government-Wide.

Creating a diverse Federal workforce that draws from all segments of society requires sustained commitment to ensuring a level playing field upon which applicants and employees may compete for opportunities within government. Sustaining the highest levels of integrity and professionalism through new outreach and recruiting efforts is paramount to achieving the strategic vision set out in this Plan.

## Definitions of “Diversity” and “Inclusion”

We define workforce diversity as 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. The concept also encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived and their differences of thought and life experiences.

We define inclusion as a culture that connects each employee to the organization; encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and leverages diversity throughout the organization so that all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential.

## Federal Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Vision Statement

Be the Nation’s model employer by leveraging diversity and fostering inclusion to deliver the best public service.

## Federal Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Mission Statement

Recruit, retain, and develop a diverse, high-performing Federal workforce that draws from all segments of society and values fairness, diversity and inclusion.

## Goals:

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1. **Workforce Diversity**. Recruit from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of American society.
2. **Workplace Inclusion**. Cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute to their full potential and further retention.
3. **Sustainability**. Develop structures and strategies to equip leaders with the ability to manage diversity, be accountable, measure results, refine approaches on the basis of such data, and institutionalize a culture of inclusion.

The three goals listed above are absolutely necessary for the successful growth of diversity and inclusion. Other characteristics of diversity and inclusion best practice plans, such as leadership, accountability, measurement, and training are components of, and integrated in, the three goals.

## Goal 1: Workforce Diversity

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*Federal agencies shall recruit from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of American society.*

**Priority 1.1:** Design and perform strategic outreach and recruitment to reach all segments of society.

### Actions:

1. Collect and analyze applicant flow data.
2. Coordinate outreach and recruitment strategies to maximize ability to recruit from a diverse, broad spectrum of potential applicants, including a variety of geographic regions, academic sources, and professional disciplines.
3. Ensure that outreach and recruitment strategies designed to draw from all segments of society, including those who are underrepresented, are employed when using staffing flexibilities and alternative hiring authorities.
4. Develop strategic partnerships with a diverse range of colleges and universities, trade schools, apprentice programs, and affinity organizations from across the country.
5. Involve managers and supervisors in recruitment activities and take appropriate action to ensure that outreach efforts are effective in addressing barriers.
6. Review and ensure that student internship and fellowship programs have diverse pipelines to draw candidates from all segments of society.

**Priority 1.2:** Use strategic hiring initiatives for people with disabilities and for veterans, conduct barrier analysis, and support Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs), to promote diversity within the workforce.

### Actions:

1. Review results of barrier analyses required under MD 715, develop action plans to eliminate any identified barrier(s), and coordinate implementation of action plans.
2. Use Schedule A hiring authority for people with disabilities and Veteran Hiring Authorities as part of strategy to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
3. Support SEPs and appoint SEP Managers as advisors on hiring, retaining and promoting a diverse workforce.

## Goal 2: Workplace Inclusion

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*Federal agencies shall cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute to their full potential and further retention.*

**Priority 2.1:** Promote diversity and inclusion in leadership development programs.

### Actions:

1. Review leadership development programs, determine whether they draw from all segments of the workforce, and develop strategies to eliminate barrier(s) where they exist.
2. Enhance mentoring programs within agencies for employees at all levels with an emphasis on aspiring Executive level employees.
3. Develop and implement a succession planning system for mission-critical occupations that includes broad outreach to a wide variety of potential leaders.

**Priority 2.2:** Cultivate a supportive, welcoming, inclusive and fair work environment.

### Actions:

1. Use flexible workplace policies that encourage employee engagement and empowerment, including, but not limited to, telework, flexiplace, wellness programs, and other work-life flexibilities and benefits.
2. Support participation in employee affinity and resource groups and provide such groups with access to agency senior leadership.
3. Administer a robust orientation process for new Federal employees and new members of the SES to introduce them to the agency culture and to provide networking opportunities.

## Goal 3: Sustainability

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*Federal agencies shall develop structures and strategies to equip leaders with the ability to manage diversity, be accountable, measure results, refine approaches on the basis of such data, and engender a culture of inclusion.*

**Priority 3.1:** Demonstrate leadership accountability, commitment, and involvement regarding diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

### Actions:

1. Affirm the value of workforce diversity and inclusion in each agency's strategic plan and include them in workforce planning activities.
2. Develop an agency-specific diversity and inclusion strategic plan, and implement that plan, through the collaboration and coordination of the Chief Human Capital Officer, the EEO Director, and the Director of Diversity (if any).
3. Ensure that all SES members, managers, supervisors and employees throughout the agency have performance measures in place to ensure the proper execution of the agency's strategic plan, which includes diversity and inclusion, and that all are trained regarding relevant legal requirements.
4. Develop and widely distribute a set of diversity and inclusion measures to track agency efforts and provide a mechanism for refining plans.

**Priority 3.2:** Fully and timely comply with all Federal laws, regulations, Executive orders, management directives, and policies related to promoting diversity and inclusion in the Federal workforce.

### Actions:

1. Employ a diversity and inclusion dashboard with metrics as a tool for agency workforce planning and reporting.
2. Timely submit to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reports required by Federal laws, regulations, Executive orders, management directives, and policies. Where an agency fails to do so, OPM will issue a Diversity and Inclusion Improvement Notice and notify the President's Management Council (PMC) of the deficiency.

**Priority 3.3:** Involve employees as participants and responsible agents of diversity, mutual respect and inclusion.

**Actions:**

1. Create a formal diversity and inclusion council at each agency with visible leadership involvement.
2. Participate in, and contribute to, OPM's Diversity and Inclusion Best Practice Program, pursuant to Executive Order 13583.
3. Ensure all employees have access to diversity and inclusion training and education, including the proper implementation of the Agency-Specific Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan as well as relevant legal requirements.