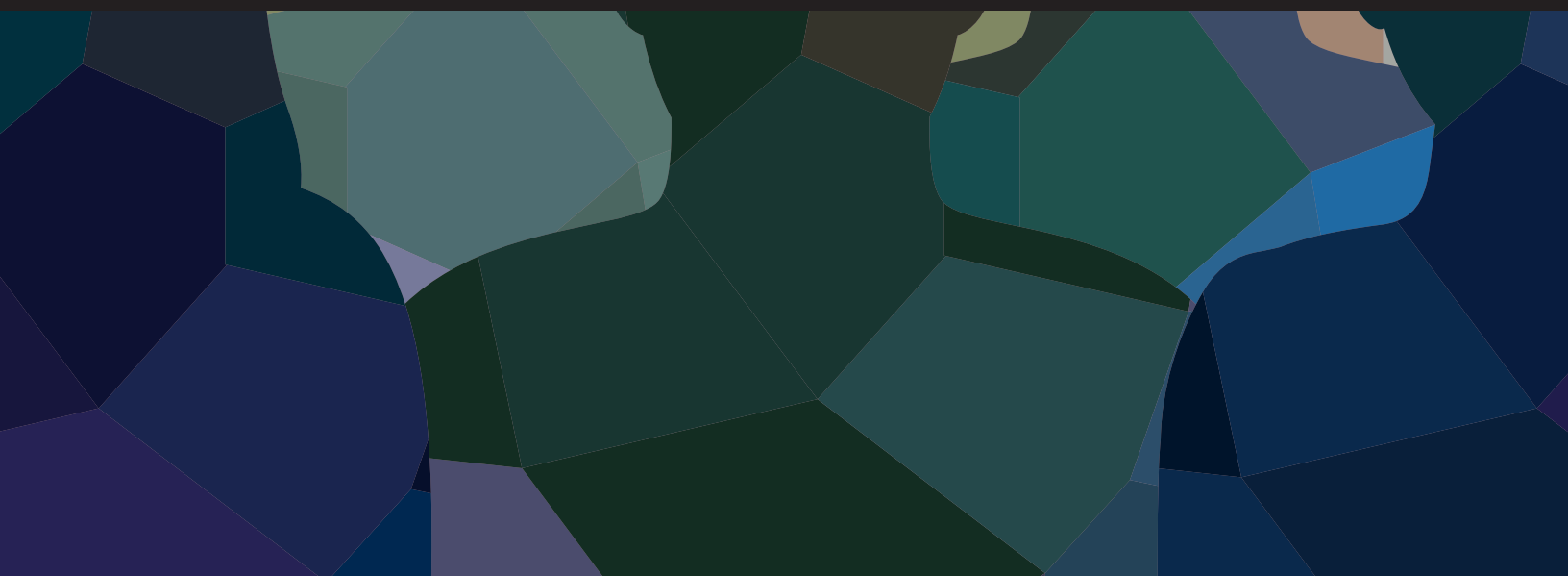




Diversity & Inclusion Employer Action Guide

A toolkit to help employers increase diversity and strengthen inclusiveness in recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention, and employee career advancement.



DIVERSITY

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INCLUSION

Introduction, Statement of Purpose, & Context

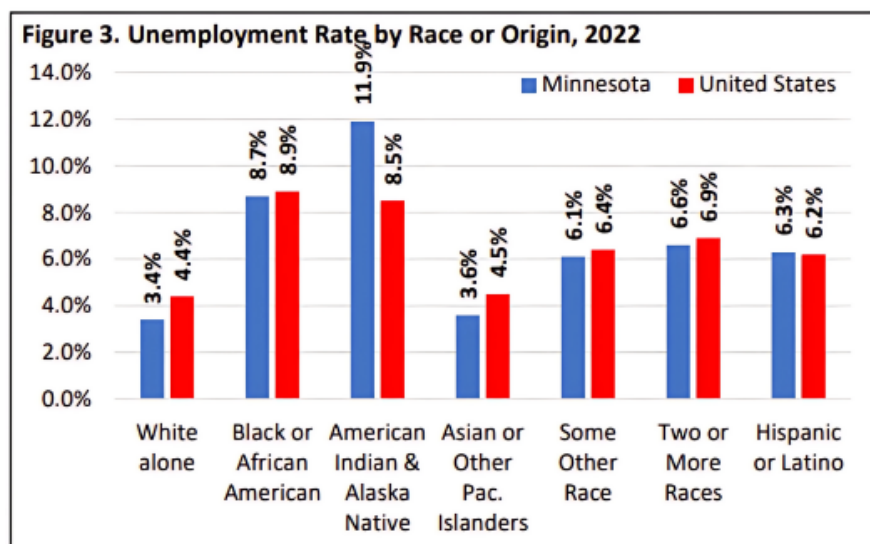
All Minnesotans need opportunities for quality, sustainable employment.

The Equity Committee of the Duluth Workforce Development Board has assembled this action guide to help employers in our community and region improve diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our purpose in creating this guide is to provide practical tools and resources that will ultimately help move the needle on workforce disparities, thus providing more equitable access to wealth and opportunity. This guide offers concrete practices to build diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces in the areas of recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention, and advancement of staff.

Context

Our country and region have a history of discrimination and persecution, leading to systemic and institutional injustices. Nationwide, including in the state of Minnesota, the [theft of land](#) from Indigenous peoples, the attempted destruction of Indigenous culture through [boarding schools](#), [redlining](#) of Black neighborhoods, [racial profiling](#) in policing, and limitations on what types of jobs Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) could hold all contributed to disparities that persist today. Specifically in our state and region, racial prejudice and systemic racism have shown themselves through the [Sandy Lake Tragedy](#), the [lynchings](#) in Duluth in 1920, [redlining in Duluth](#), the [destruction of Black neighborhoods](#) in the 1950s to make way for the connection of Minneapolis and Saint Paul by Interstate 94 and for highway projects in other parts of the state, and the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Consequently, we still see disparities today in educational attainment, employment, income, and wealth.

This is not just a national concern, but a state and local one. According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development [summary](#) of the 2018-2022 American Community Survey, American Indians had the highest unemployment rate in Minnesota in 2022, at 11.9%, followed by Black or African American Minnesotans at 8.7%. This rate is between 2 and 4 times the unemployment rate of white Minnesotans the same year (which was 3.4%).



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey

The Economic Status of Minnesotans 2023, MN State Demographic Center

This disparity is even worse in [Northeast Minnesota](#), with the unemployment rate for American Indians at 14.1% and for African Americans at a whopping 22.9%, compared to 4.4% for whites. Similarly, the median household income for American Indian households in Minnesota in 2022 was \$45,289, and for Black or African American households it was \$49,738, amounts that are barely over half of the median household income of white households (\$87,692). The income disparities are almost as bad when limited to Northeast Minnesota: The median household income for American Indian households in 2022 was \$38,592 and for Black households was \$39,518, compared to \$67,866 for white households in the region. There are also significant [disparities in educational attainment](#) by race: Of the Minnesota population aged 25 years and over, 26.2% who are Hispanic or Latino have less than a high school diploma, compared with 18.3% of those who are Black or African American, 18.2% of those who are American Indian, and 17.2% of those who are Asian, compared to only 4.1% of those who are white.

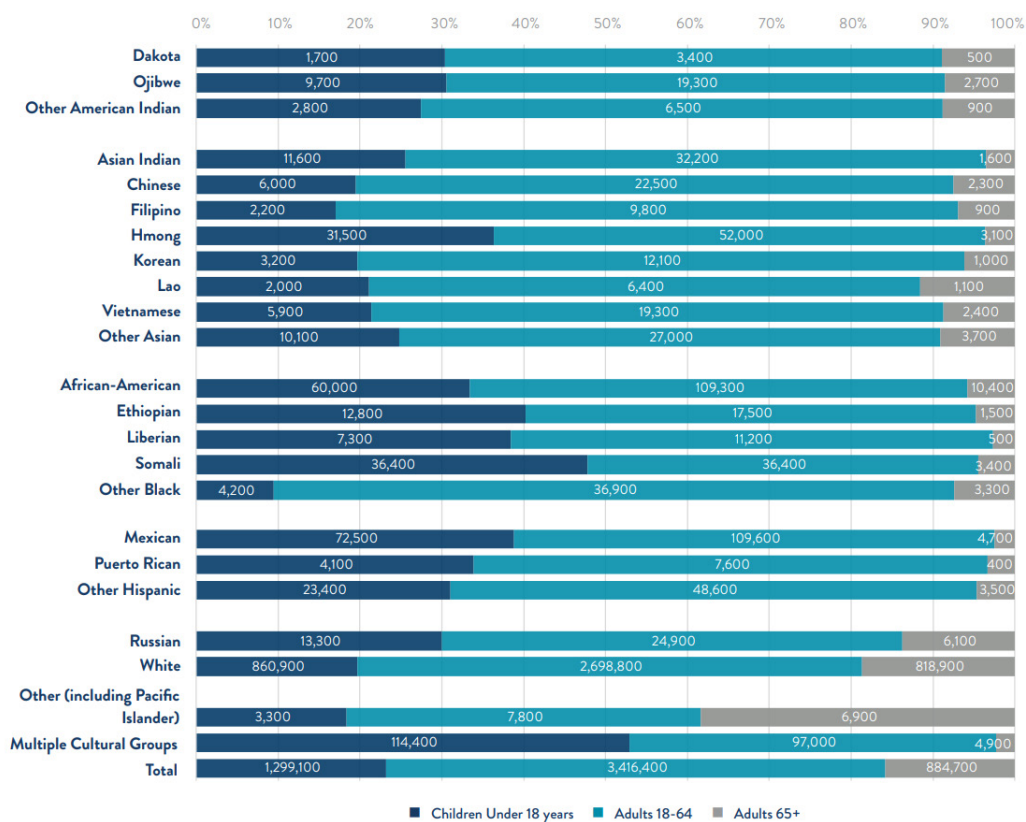
Race and ethnicity are not the only areas in which disparities are a concern. Community members with diverse abilities, sexual orientations, ages, genders, religions, nationalities, first languages, and more also face discrimination that must be addressed. Even when a range of factors are considered, Minnesota's women earn on average [5% less than men](#) as of 2022. [Minnesotans with a disability](#) between the ages of 18-64 are 2.6 times more likely to be unemployed and 3.4 times more likely to not participate in the labor force than Minnesotans with no disabilities; similarly, Minnesotans with a disability are more than twice as likely than Minnesotans with no disabilities to live below the federal poverty line. Nationally, two out of three workers between the ages of 45 and 75 cite [age discrimination at work](#) according to the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. For all these reasons and more, it is imperative for employers and workplaces to recognize and address the impacts of discrimination and bias (both conscious and unconscious) and move toward inclusivity.



Impact & Looking Ahead

Addressing centuries of social challenges comes with tremendous opportunities and benefits for jobseekers, employers, and our community. If all members of our community have access to quality jobs in thriving workplaces that truly represent the diversity of our region, our economy will be stronger. [Research has shown](#) that diversity in the workplace creates a workforce that is more innovative and apt to solve problems. And our future is more diverse – [May 2024 projections](#) from the Minnesota State Demographic Center are that Minnesota’s population will be over 27.6% BIPOC by 2035, compared to 23% in 2024. The percentage of BIPOC Minnesotans of working age or younger is even higher; according to the Minnesota State Demographic Center’s report [The Economic Status of Minnesotans 2023](#), “More than 33 percent of Minnesota’s children belong to a BIPOC cultural group. In contrast, about 20 percent of working age adults (18 to 64 years) and just 7 percent of older adults (age 65 years and older) do.”

Figure 4a: Age Distribution by Cultural Group



This trend is also present locally: According to Minnesota Department of Education’s Public School Student Enrollment Data for the 2023-2024 school year, about 23% of Duluth Public School students currently identify as BIPOC, as compared to 12% in the community at large ([U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey](#)). Additionally, a [growing number](#) of teens and young adults nationwide are transgender or identify as gender non-binary – meaning that the next generation of workers has a completely different understanding and vocabulary around gender and gender identity. To meet our growing workforce needs, we must reach our untapped workforce and employable people in our community. As our community and workforce grows more diverse, it is imperative that workplaces are welcoming and responsive to these changes.

Regardless of the industry sector, size, or type of business organization, employers can create better systems to recruit, hire, onboard, retain, and promote employees more effectively. This guide provides concrete tools and resources based on best practices that all types of employers can implement to create a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Equity Statement

In an effort and commitment to address opportunity gaps affecting Northeast Minnesota's workforce, we recognize:

- Equity is different from equality. Equity is a commitment to justice and fairness, while equality demands sameness.
- The pursuit of workforce equity acknowledges that historical conditions and structural and institutional barriers have withheld opportunity and success for community members based on their race, gender or perceived gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, income, and other societal conditions.
- Eliminating structural and institutional barriers to opportunity requires systemic change that allows for fair distribution of resources, access, information, and other support to let people thrive.

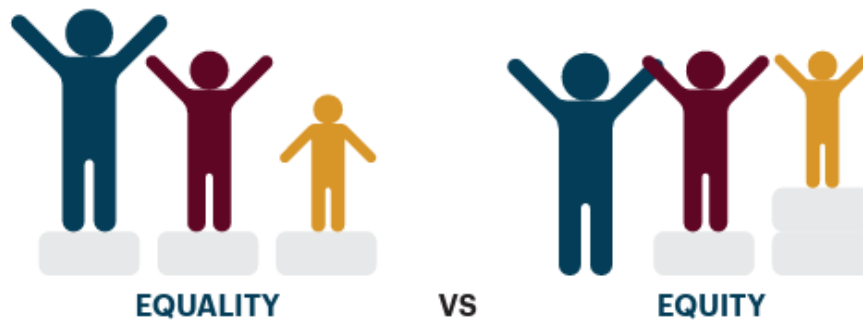


Photo credit: <https://www.nacweb.org/about-us/equity-definition>

**EVERY PLANT HAS THEIR OWN
REQUIREMENTS IN ORDER
TO GROW...**



AND SO DO PEOPLE.

Getting Started

Whether you are well on your way or just getting started, we are glad you are seeking more information on creating a diverse, welcoming, and inclusive workplace.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a journey. The work is ongoing and there is no simple checklist to get this done quickly. As a starting place, it is important to define why your organization is interested in DEI. Maybe you are really having a hard time finding employees, or perhaps you have realized or received feedback that your workplace is not doing enough to be inclusive. Again, there is no wrong answer or required starting point. Gather your team of champions that are committed to doing this change work, and start to develop some shared understanding and terminology for:

Diversity • Equity • Inclusion

Define your organization's DEI goals and the baseline from where you are starting. If you are attempting to recruit more individuals of color in a predominantly white community or employment sector, your focus should first be on internal systems and processes to make sure anyone you recruit will feel welcomed and safe, and thus be retained. This process is entirely non-linear, so use this guide not as step-by-step directions but rather as a compass guiding you to the North Star. Even when you take a wrong turn, re-orient yourself and your group. The most important thing is to ensure you don't give up. Working on a single step, policy, or process at a time will yield better results.

Since there are many obstacles within DEI work, it is common for organizations to hire external consultants to assist with this type of foundational work. The process begins with conducting an organizational assessment, which then feeds into an action plan. Having a third party that specializes in this work can be very influential. [This article](#) explains more about what that process can look like. We recommend finding a local partner if possible. For those employers that have the internal capacity or are unable to hire a local partner, we have included some resources on conducting DEI self-assessments at the end of this guide.

Once you have a solid or tentative plan, you're ready to utilize the rest of the information within this guide.

A Note About Job Quality

Recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse staff is challenging if the jobs being offered are not quality jobs. It is increasingly important to workers find not just any job, but a job that offers the pay and benefits that allow them to achieve their personal, financial, and professional goals.

The definition of a quality job can be highly personal and individual. There are, however, common [principles](#) that outline characteristics of quality jobs. These principles form the foundation of all the tools and resources included in this guide.

To learn more about job quality, you can visit the Aspen Institute's [Job Quality Tools Library](#) or Jobs for the Future's [Quality Jobs Framework](#). You can also find a number of job quality tools and resources for employers on the CareerForce website's [Job Quality](#) page. More quality jobs in Minnesota means more employees who can support their families and feel a sense of belonging at work, as well as less employee turnover for businesses and organizations.

The Five Focus Areas to Implement Equitable & Inclusive Best Practices

1. Recruitment

End Result:

To establish a system of recruiting employees that reaches a diverse audience and that is inclusive of the spectrum of gender, abilities, age, and non-dominant races and cultures.

This system should be defined, repeatable, and followed similarly for each job opening and individual hired.

Suggested Metrics:

Gather information about the demographics of those who apply. This information must be kept separate from the application and reviewed only after the hire is made. Track demographics of applicants such as gender, race, and geography, as well as source of job referral to monitor the impact of recruiting efforts.

Best Practices:

1. Create Inclusive and Equitable Job Descriptions & Postings

- Use language that appeals to everyone.
 - Use gender-neutral language (i.e., firefighter vs. fireman). You can use this [gender decoder tool](#) to evaluate the language you are using before posting the opening.
 - Use [plain language](#) at a reading level accessible to all candidates.
 - Avoid jargon and idioms, which can create avoidable language barriers for non-native English speakers and other groups.
 - Define the expectations of the job using [ADA Compliance](#). State essential physical demands in the job description and the frequency expected to fulfill them.
- Explicitly state wage and benefit information in your job posting. Withholding wage/salary ranges in job postings disadvantages women and people of color, who are less likely to succeed in negotiating salary than white male applicants. This is why it is not only a best practice to explicitly state wage and benefit information in job postings, but a [legal requirement](#) in Minnesota as of January 1st, 2025.
- Include an [Equal Employment Opportunity statement](#).
- Consider whether it makes sense to include an Indigenous [land acknowledgment](#) statement somewhere on the job posting or company website.
 - Deciding whether to include a land acknowledgment is a process that requires self-reflection and research and should not just be done to “check a box.” The Native Governance Center has a [Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment](#) with some tips for how to approach the process.

- Assess job requirements for true necessity to the job and clearly state requirements.
 - Common job requirements that may not be necessary include driver’s license, high school diploma/GED, specific degree or field of study, personal vehicle, physical requirements.
 - Consider using the phrase “access to reliable transportation” over “access to personal vehicle.”
 - Carefully consider if a high school or college degree is required to fulfill job responsibilities. Whenever possible, allow years of work/life or military experience in lieu of a degree.

- State in the job posting whether a drug test, criminal background check, motor vehicle record check, and/or credit check will be conducted as part of the application process.
 - Familiarize yourself with [Minnesota’s “Ban the Box” law](#), which states that an employer must wait until the applicant has been selected for an interview or until a conditional job offer has been extended to ask about the applicant’s criminal background.
 - Set clear criteria to determine which criminal offenses would exclude someone from employment.
 - Do not consider arrests - they are not proof of guilt.
 - Do not ask about conviction records and/or commit to carefully evaluating the relevance of criminal convictions.
 - Create a waiver process that would allow an applicant with a criminal background to request special consideration based on defined factors, such as enrollment with a community-based partner organization or completion of a recognized program.
 - Consider whether a drug test and/or credit check are necessary to fulfill job responsibilities. Is it a legal or regulatory requirement of someone doing that job? Are drug tests and/or credit checks just being used to screen out certain types of applicants, or because that’s what the employer has always done?
 - If a drug test will be required, set clear policies about which types of substances showing up as positive on the test would exclude someone from employment. Also create and clearly communicate an appeal process to allow candidates to contest results or provide verification of medical use.

- Highlight your diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies as an introduction to the organization. The suggestions below are a way that you can demonstrate your organization’s commitment to DEI and should not be enacted until they genuinely reflect your organization’s culture.



- Be transparent with prospective employees about your organization’s DEI goals and where you are at in the process of achieving those goals.
 - If you are at the point where your organization is a safe space for LGBTQ+ individuals, you can post a rainbow flag sticker on the front door/window and on the organization’s website to signify this.
 - As your staff becomes more diverse, update the pictures of employees on your website to reflect this.
 - Choose art to hang in the office from diverse artists and themes that represent diverse cultures.
 - Be thoughtful about whether representations or statements of political positions on the company website and materials support diversity and inclusion.
- Include a cover letter or summary document in postings or employment sites that talks about workplace culture, particularly as it relates to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment.

2. Expand Job Posting Locations and Strategy

- Broaden your list of where you post jobs to reach diverse audiences.
 - Post on [MinnesotaWorks](#) and [NORTHFORCE](#) for a targeted reach toward local jobseekers.
 - Host a virtual or in-person hiring event at [CareerForce](#).
- Build relationships with local educational institutions to create a pool of students from which to recruit potential employees. Most of these institutions use [Handshake](#) to connect students to job opportunities:
 - [Lake Superior College Career Services](#)
 - Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
 - [Northwood Technical College Career Services](#)
 - [University of Minnesota-Duluth Career Center](#)
 - [College of St. Scholastica Career Services](#)
 - [University of Wisconsin – Superior Employer Resources](#)
- Build a community and following on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok,
- Snapchat, and/or LinkedIn if it fits your organization.
- [Mossier](#) offers a partnership with employers that can help with recruiting LGBTQ candidates.
- Work with local organizations that provide employment support to people with disabilities, such as:
 - [Vocational Rehabilitation Services](#)
 - [Choice Unlimited](#)
 - [UDAC](#)
 - [Trillium Services](#)

- Build relationships with local community organizations that offer employment programs to cast a wider net. For example:
 - [True North Goodwill](#)/SOAR Career Solutions
 - [Community Action Duluth](#)
 - [Life House](#)
 - [Family Freedom Center](#)
- Accept paper applications and/or provide ways to access and complete applications through publicly accessible computers at libraries or CareerForce.
- Have staff available to support jobseekers in completing their application, or partner with CareerForce to provide assistance through their Career Lab.
- Consider [Skills-Based Hiring](#), an emerging [best practice](#) that focuses on individuals' abilities and competencies rather than their education, experience, or interview skills.

3. Create Multiple and Accessible Entry Points

- Create or identify entry-level positions that have fewer requirements and/or eliminate barriers to entry.
 - Market these positions as an entry point for your organization with a clear map of opportunities for advancement.
- Develop “grow your own” programs that integrate [on-the-job training](#) into all positions, especially those at the entry level.
- [Create internship positions](#) and ensure adequate training and mentoring is provided to create a meaningful experience.
- [Build an apprenticeship program](#) to offer earn-while-you-learn job opportunities and ensure a continuous pipeline of skilled workers.
- Partner with high school [Career and Technical Education](#) programs to offer job site tours and connection to real-world experience.
- Partner with [career pathway training](#) programs to connect with trained jobseekers.



Recruitment Tools/Resources:

- [Creating an Inclusive Job Posting](#) - Career Force
- [Territory Acknowledgement](#) – Native Land Digital
- [Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement](#) – US Department of Arts and Culture
- [Developing a DEI Recruiting Plan](#) – Built In
- [Diversity in Advertising: A Guide to Inclusion](#) - Maryville Online

2. Hiring

End Result:

To mitigate and prevent unconscious bias in screening, interviewing, and hiring candidates.

Suggested Metrics:

Once the hiring process is over, review applicant demographics and document the number of candidates who applied compared to the number of candidates who were interviewed from diverse backgrounds. Track hiring data over time to assess if diversity efforts are effective.

Best Practices:

1. Hiring Team

- Ensure the interview team includes racial and gender diversity and utilizes at least one person from another team, department, or partnering organization.
- Ensure the hiring team has had training on awareness and prevention of implicit bias.
- If possible, include staff from different levels at the organization (i.e. representatives from upper management, middle management, and front-line staff.)
- Consider implementing [Blind Hiring](#) techniques.
 - Remove or code the applicant's name, gender, and address before the hiring team reviews applications. Applicant tracking software can help with blind hiring.

2. Application Review and Interview Process

- Audit the application evaluation/scoring and interview process for potential bias.
- Create a [scoring rubric](#) to reduce subjective evaluation of application materials and interviews.
 - Allow interviewers to write comments as to why ratings were chosen to provide additional qualitative information.
 - Develop a threshold for permitting grammar and spelling mistakes on resumes/ applications, when applicable.

“ Minimize power imbalances in interviews by using a rubric, giving clear expectations, and communicating promptly with applicants.

- Kayla D. - Director of Administration ”

- Articulate interview expectations with the interviewee and identify if certain factors will impact hiring decisions. This can include but is not limited to: Timeliness, expected attire, presentation options, etc.
- Ask candidates for their gender pronouns and preferred name and/or name pronunciation and be sure to address them correctly during the interview.
- Give the candidate a thorough “what to expect” for the interview including who they will be meeting with, what the process will look like, and how to cancel/change the interview time if needed.
 - **Example:** “When you come in for an interview, you will be greeted by Andy. He will bring you to the conference room, where you will have time to read over the interview questions and fill out some paperwork. After that, I will bring you on a tour of the shop. You’ll return to the conference room for the interview conversation with myself and the supervisor, Andrea. If you need to change or cancel your interview, you can call, email, or text me, or use the original booking link from the email I sent you previously.”
- Provide interview questions in advance, so candidates are able to adequately think through and prepare to articulate their response.
- Online scheduling tools like [Calendly](#) make scheduling and rescheduling interviews much easier. You can set up automatic text message reminders for upcoming appointments and a post interview thank you message.
- Utilize a uniform and standard set of criteria for interviewing methods, including asking the same questions of all candidates.
- Determine whether follow-up questions will be allowed. Include [interview questions](#) about the applicant’s experience working with coworkers and/or customers from diverse backgrounds and examples of demonstrating their commitment to equity/inclusiveness.
- Do not ask about an applicant’s past or current pay. This is not only a best practice; it is [the law](#) in Minnesota.
- Review interview panel comments to assess whether implicit bias may have been a factor in candidate evaluation and follow up with training to avoid in the future.
- Adequately plan for time.
 - Ensure enough time is allowed for the candidate to ask questions.
 - Schedule time between each candidate or after all interviews are completed to allow the interview panel time to fully debrief.



- Allow time before the interview formally begins for a candidate to review interview questions and the job description or a summary of key duties.
- Be prepared to talk about your diversity and inclusion values, initiatives, and/or goals in the interview.
- If the position requires a focus on skills and aptitude, consider including skills tests/evaluations as part of the interview process. Set clear criteria for how each section will be weighed and scored in the hiring process. This is especially important in roles where the job requires more focus on skill and aptitude and less focus on people skills.

3. Post-Interview

- Award points for additional factors such as relevant experience/background, addition of skills currently lacking on the work team, or bringing a unique perspective to the organization.
- Avoid evaluating subjective factors like “good fit” or “[professionalism](#),” or giving a likeability score in the point system.
- Do not base hiring decisions on hair texture or style. As of January 31, 2023, [the Crown Act](#) prohibits discrimination based on race-based natural hair texture and styles such as braids, locs, and twists.
- Solicit candidate feedback on their experience with the interview process.

Ways to Build a More Inclusive Minnesota to Prevent Discrimination

Employers, schools, landlords, and businesses all have a role to play when it comes to creating inclusive spaces that are free from discrimination for Minnesotans. Below are some ways to prevent hair discrimination.

- 1 Create Strong Policies:** Create and distribute a policy that affirms natural hair textures and styles and prohibits racial discrimination. If there are policies based on health and safety, such as requiring hair to be tied up or put in a net, those policies must apply equally to all hair styles and textures.
- 2 Provide Meaningful Trainings:** Train employees on policies that prohibit race discrimination, including hair discrimination, and train employees about the importance of intentionally creating inclusive spaces, free from discrimination.
- 3 Enforce Policies:** Enforce policies that prohibit race discrimination, including hair discrimination, and hold supervisors and employees accountable for failing to report or address discrimination or harassment.

Preventing Hair Discrimination Fact Sheet, MN Department of Human Rights

4. Technology

- If conducting virtual interviews, provide candidates with the organization's remote interview protocol or [best practices](#) in advance, addressing camera, microphone, operating system requirements, backgrounds, whether the chat box will be open, etc.
- Provide alternative methods of conducting virtual interviews if technology fails or if the candidate does not have computer/internet access.
 - Whenever possible, include a default phone-in option for virtual interviews.



What Is Blind Hiring? (How to Implement It) - Embroker.com

Hiring Resources:

[Recognizing Hidden Bias in Recruiting and Hiring](#) - CareerForce

[Equitable Hiring Tool](#) - City of Madison, WI

[Minnesota Employers' Fair Chance Hiring Guide](#) - Twin Cities R!se in partnership with Root & Rebound Reentry Advocates

[Harvard Implicit Association Test](#) – tools to assess for implicit bias

3. Onboarding

End Result:

Establish two-way communication to fulfill the needs of new hires and employers, and ensure new hires feel welcomed into an inclusive workplace and prepared to perform at their full potential.

Suggested Metric:

1. Utilize an onboarding survey after the probation period ends to evaluate effectiveness of onboarding and identify opportunities for improvement. Ask employees to evaluate satisfaction with each orientation component/module, completion rate of each module, assessment of organizational culture, and feeling welcomed.
2. Match survey questions to different key components of the onboarding plan.
3. Consider ways to conduct surveys that will elicit honest feedback without fear of consequences. For example, consider having a neutral third party from Human Resources or another department to receive and review responses and generate recommendations.

Best Practices:

1. Norms and Expectations

- Ensure that the new employee's workspace is completely set up before the first day and that all work-related needs have been assessed and met.
- Provide a [Request for Accommodations Form](#) or a similar protocol before the first day and ensure accommodations are in place.
- Provide new hires with training manuals, employee newsletters, reading material, or other relevant information before the employee's first day so they feel prepared to come to work.
 - Also provide time at work during the first days or weeks to review onboarding materials and highlight any questions.
- Provide information prior to the first day that details dress code, where to park (if applicable), whether to bring a lunch, what time to arrive and where to go, a detailed schedule for the first day, and any other information that would help the person fully prepare.

2. Clear and Comprehensive Onboarding Process/Orientation Plan

- Draft a written orientation guide that includes:
 - Human Resources paperwork
 - Overview of the organization, including review of the organizational chart
 - Building walk-through
 - Face-to-face introduction to key staff
 - One-on-one conversations with peers/primary coworkers integrating training content
 - Connection to other recent hires

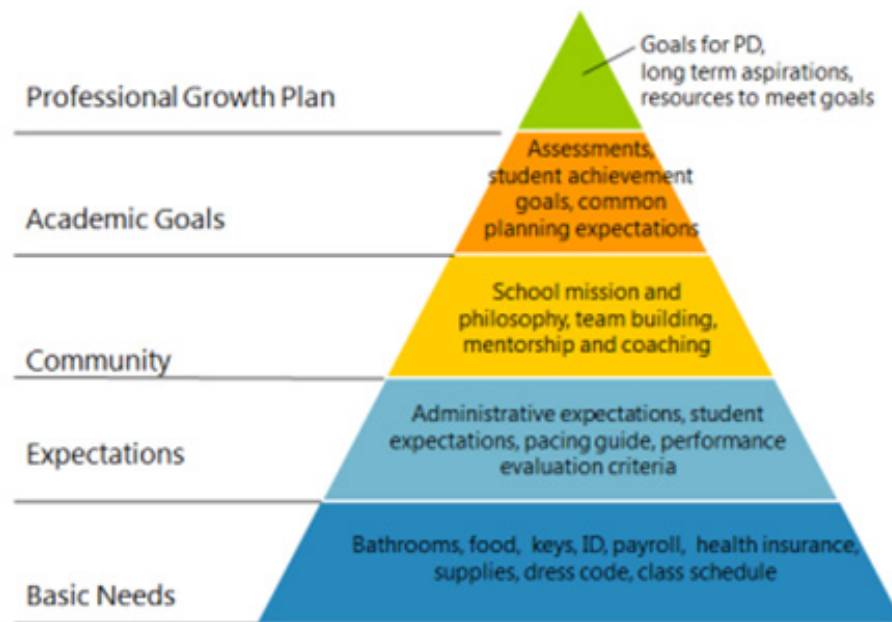
- Designate employees to eat lunch together with the new hire at a specific time and location on the first day
- Set and communicate clear performance expectations, with designated opportunities to evaluate performance (i.e. at three months, six months, and twelve months on the job).
- Provide a job description that includes details of the employee’s role within the organization and how their job responsibilities fit with those of other staff on their team.
- Prioritize an inclusion program as part of orientation.
 - Share an Inclusion Statement before or during the first week of employment. This could be simple and straightforward or more in-depth.
 - Communicate established workplace norms, including ‘unspoken rules.’ Norms often include lunch hour expectations, dress code, tardiness, cell phone usage, perfume use, etc.
 - Send new hires individual welcome communications from leadership.
 - Encourage personal outreach from colleagues during the first week of work.
 - Send out an email to all staff with a photo introducing the new hire and sharing information about the person’s role, and where in the organization they will be assigned.
- Clearly define and share the organization’s approach to conflict management.
- Provide and review information on how to report discrimination or harassment.
- Conduct an open conversation during orientation to share communication and learning styles between leadership and new hires.
 - Give everyone the same language for understanding strengths and differences by having employees on a team or in a department complete the same strengths assessment, and make this strengths assessment part of orientation.
 - Moving forward after orientation, incorporate regular discussions of team members’ strengths into team meetings and other relevant workplace settings.
- Draft a work plan that includes a specific schedule of meetings, tasks, and deadlines for the first 2-4 weeks of work.
- Schedule regular check-ins between the new hire and their direct supervisor during the first 3-6 months on the job.



3. Professional Growth Planning

- Establish a culture of continued learning and professional development from day one.
 - Have supervisors and new employees work together to create Professional Growth Plans. Review plans at least once a year to revise and note progress.
 - Set aside a budget for professional development, with specific guidance on how employees can request support for training.
- Map out pathways for advancement within your organization, with specific information on skills/training required to move into higher-level positions.
 - Build in opportunities to job shadow or conduct informational interviews so employees can explore advancement opportunities within the organization.

Leaders can use a hierarchy of needs to prioritize orientation activities and information:



New Teacher Onboarding and Cultivation - TNTP

Onboarding Tools/Resources:

[Virtual Onboarding and Cultivation Guide](#) – The New Teacher Project

[Onboarding Tools](#) - Human Resources Today

[Onboarding Remote Workers](#) - Workable

[Onboarding Empathy: 12 Best Practices For DEI Training](#) - Forbes

[Best Practices for Inclusive Onboarding](#) - The Diversity Movement

[Inclusive Onboarding Checklist](#) – Harvard University

[Employers' Practical Guide to Reasonable Accommodation Under the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) – Job Accommodation Network

[Top 5 Alternatives to CliftonStrengths: Workplace Personality Tests](#) – Team Dynamics

4. Retention

End Result:

To reduce employee turnover and retain high-quality and diverse staff.

Suggested Metric:

1. Conduct an employee satisfaction survey or Stay Interview to measure qualitative work values like trust, comfort, and feeling valued. Have a protocol in place for following up on responses.
2. Keep data on employee retention and set a goal for retention rate.
3. Conduct exit interviews with all employees leaving the organization to evaluate areas for improvement. Ideally, these should be completed anonymously or with a neutral third party such who can elicit honest feedback.
4. Track and regularly audit wages of employees in relation to demographics to ensure pay equity. DEED Wage Data and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Economy Reports are great sources of statewide and national data by job title that helps ensure you are paying your employees competitive wages.

Best Practices:

1. Relationships and Welcoming Environment

- Check in and tend to the emotional, personal, and professional needs of coworkers/employees.
- Understand and respect that different people will need different kinds of support.
- At the team level, humanize the workplace with more meaningful one-on-one and team interactions.
- Encourage self-care and work-life balance.
- Facilitate formation of Employee Resource Groups (i.e. new parents' groups, culture- or ethnic-specific groups, LGBTQ+ employee groups).
- Create opportunities for relationship-building and team-building in addition to day-to-day operations.
- Regardless of the size and resources of your organization, there are ways to reward and recognize employees who have made positive contributions to the team and organization.
- Recognition does not have to be formal or public. Show appreciation when someone goes above and beyond and acknowledge extra effort.
- Find creative ways to recognize small successes and accomplishments.
- Formalize recognition practices and support supervisors in recognizing the employees they supervise.

- Have systems in place to allow employees to submit feedback and report problems in the work place without fear of retribution. Follow up on complaints or issues that are raised and communicate any actions taken to resolve the issue.

2. Professional Development

- Start by having employees complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a self-assessment that looks at individual and collective cultural competency.
- Allow employees to engage with their Individual Development Plan, which results from the IDI, during work time.
- Create opportunities for ongoing reflection and self-assessment through regular (at least annual) diversity training.
- Encourage all staff to actively continue working to understand and alter the unconscious bias that instinctively emerges into stereotypes and attitudes toward 'other' groups of people by allowing time spent at work for reading, watching films, participating in discussion groups, or attending diverse cultural events.
- Offer training courses at both the staff and leadership level on anti-bias, microaggressions, handling conflict, effective communication, and cultural competence.
- Conduct Stay Interviews to understand what is important to employees (must establish trusted two-way communication).

3. Inclusion

- Launch and maintain a DEI council, committee, or task force to prioritize a diverse, equitable, and inclusive working environment, identify systemic inequities and improve the organization's workplace culture.
- Consider how your organization makes space for diverse ideas and perspectives to be shared, considered, and implemented.
- Use inclusive language at all times and in all conversations.
- Ensure that all leaders in the organization (not just the Human Resources Department) are familiar with the state and federal laws around reasonable accommodations.
 - Create a written Reasonable Accommodation Policy and provide it to employees.
 - Budget for providing workplace accommodations. From at least July 1, 2023 through June 1, 2025, you may be able to get reimbursed for these expenses by the State of Minnesota's Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund.
- Create a workplace culture and structure that encourages employees from under-represented groups to share their concerns without fear of retaliation.



- Create an expectation that all employees challenge biased, racist, and xenophobic behaviors in the moment, especially in team settings. Ensure supervisors and managers are prepared to role model this behavior, and to facilitate the team through any tension that may emerge as a result.
- Be strategic in planning for workplace events.
 - Ensure location, time of day, and food and beverage choices are accessible for all staff.
 - Remember that some staff may have family commitments that make it difficult to attend events outside of work hours.
 - Make events that include consumption of alcohol optional, and always provide non-alcoholic options.
 - If food is served, provide kosher, halal, and vegetarian options as well as options for employees with food restrictions such as dairy allergies or gluten sensitivities.
 - Conduct an anonymous staff survey about food preferences prior to workplace gatherings where food will be present.
 - If possible, avoid scheduling food-centered events during times when food intake is restricted in some religions, such as Ramadan, Lent, and Yom Kippur.
 - Make sure all employees have a plan for transportation if a meeting/event takes place in a different location.
 - Explicitly invite staff of non-dominant cultures to create and contribute to organizational culture and norms, such as holiday parties, recognized holidays, and social events.
- Have an open door policy for managers.
- Implement a 360 Review for leadership staff.
- Include frontline staff in decision-making when appropriate.
- Create flexible work schedules and/or remote work policies and allow for varied work schedules if applicable - but take steps to prevent remote or hybrid work from limiting opportunities for women or other groups.



4. Diversity

- Identify factors which represent diversity within your organization, including gender, race, where employees live, educational background, religion, or other factors. Provide employees an opportunity to share information about their diversity characteristics during learning sessions, and how that shows up and can be supported at work.
- Work with diversity and inclusion experts in your area to provide regular consultations and/or trainings.
- Provide supervisors with diversity management training so they feel confident in their ability to manage people who are different from them.

Retention Tools/Resources:

[Hidden Bias in the Workplace](#) - CareerForceMN.com

[Beyond Diversity: A Roadmap to Building an Inclusive Organization](#) - Green 2.0

[White Supremacy Culture at work with antidotes](#) - Tema Okun, dismantlingracism.org

[White Dominant Culture & Something Different](#) – Elevate Inclusion Strategies

[Diversity Worst Practices](#) – Diversity Training Group

[Workplace Belonging Grows From Dignity, Not Diversity](#) – Aida Mariam Davis, Stanford Social Innovation Review (April 26, 2021)

[20 Effective Employee Recognition Ideas For Today’s Workforce](#) - Insperity

[20 Fun & Effective Employee Recognition Ideas For 2024](#) - People Managing People



Intersectional Anti-Racist Organizational Development Continuum¹

Monocultural		Non-Discriminating		Anti-Oppressive	
Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
The Exclusionary Organization	The Club	The Compliance Organization	The Affirming Organization	The Redefining Organization	The Intersectional Anti-Racist Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No qualms maintaining dominant group’s power and privilege • Covets exclusivity, restricts membership • Overtly discriminates by excluding or segregating subordinated groups • Minimizes or resists non-discriminatory compliance measures • Power and resources are highly concentrated top-down • Colonial and segregating logic, dealing with difference by excluding, controlling, exploiting, discarding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monocultural by default, not necessarily intentional • May present a limited number of “token” members from other social identity groups • One “right” way to be and to do things • Not inviting • Expects conformity to norms, policies, and practices of dominant culture • Maintains privilege of the dominant groups (without naming it) • Logic of gate-keeping; surveilling, segregating, “old boys club” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-discriminatory compliance measures • Some diverse representation, mainly entry level • Symbolic or surface level efforts for inclusion • Doesn’t make waves to disturb dominant culture • May be passively exclusive, by default • No attention to structural change • Committed to prejudice reduction; non-discrimination • Logic of color-blind compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values interpersonal differences • Actively seeks diverse recruitment and promotions • Members still expected to fit into dominant culture status quo norms, policies, practices • Celebrates diversity and inclusion awareness • Uses inclusive messaging • Conforms to structural hierarchy benefiting dominant groups • Traditional interpersonal “D&I”: logic of Multiculturalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In transition towards structural change supporting racial & intersectional equity • Moving beyond managing diversity / non-discrimination to centering diverse leadership and shared decision-making • Redefining norms to more actively create cultural inclusivity • Committed to structural change based in racial equity principles, policies, practices and relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard of full representation, engagement and power-sharing at all org. levels across intersectionalities • Mission, values, culture, operations, and services reflect contributions of diverse groups, communities • Leaders, members act to eliminate all forms of oppression within organization • Actively partners in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate oppression, create equitable impacts

¹ Model adapted from original research by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman: Jackson, B. W (2006). Theory and practice of multicultural organization development. In Jones, B. B. & Brazzel, M. (Eds.), The NTL Handbook of Organization Development and Change (pp. 139-154). San Francisco, CA, Pfeiffer

5. Advancement

End Result:

To create diversity at all levels of an organization, including in leadership roles.

Suggested Metrics:

1. Keep data on gender, race/ethnicity, age, and other forms of diversity in leadership roles at all levels, throughout the organization.
 - a. Specifically, look at the demographics of the whole organization as compared to the demographics of those in leadership positions.
2. Compare the starting pay, as well as pace of pay increases, of BIPOC employees and women with that of white employees and men across all levels of the organization to ensure pay equity.

Best Practices:

1. Equity in Promotion & Advancement

- Review data on diversity in leadership roles on at least an annual basis. Ensure that any data revealing racial disparities in leadership of programs or internal operations is addressed concretely, sufficiently, and in a timely manner.
- Building a diverse leadership team begins with hiring diverse employees into entry- and mid-level positions.
- Be transparent and consistent on promotion processes and timelines.
- Base hiring and promotion decisions on skills and competencies, rather than on traditional criteria such as educational credentials, years of experience, and company tenure.
- Prioritize internal advancement by filling job openings from within whenever possible.
- All supervisors should talk with employees about their hopes for advancement, and work together to develop a professional development plan (see additional details below).
- Audit the diversity and equity implications of all talent decisions (i.e., promotions, layoffs, furloughs, pay cuts) to ensure no particular group is unfairly impacted.

Investing in the growth of your current staff builds loyalty and strengthens the foundation of your organization, unlocking potential that drives long-term success.

- *Kayla D. - Director of Administration*

2. Workforce Programs

- Consciously and proactively mentor employees with leadership potential to prepare them for taking on leadership roles within the organization.
- Mentorship does not always have to be internal. Help match employees with mentors either within or outside the organization, and then support connection with mentors during work time.
- Informational interviews allow employees to speak with someone within or outside the organization to learn about their day-to-day, and what skills are most valuable
- Job Shadowing allows employees to spend all or part of the work day with someone who holds a job the employee hopes to move into in the future. It allows the employee to see what a typical day looks like, and observe key leadership skills in action. This is especially helpful when the employee seeks to move into another department or division they may not typically interact with during their day.
- Offer paid internships as an entry point into the organization, with meaningful opportunities to learn in-demand skills, gain exposure to career pathways, and work on projects that will build the individual's resume.
- Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training
 - Create opportunities to gain new skills while working, through an earn-and-learn apprenticeship model or similar structured on-the-job training program.
- Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)
 - ERGs can allow diverse employees to connect with others with similar experiences and provide a less formal option for mentorship.
- Consider including Executive Sponsors, leaders in the organization who are members of an ERG and can advocate for the ERG's goals at the executive level. This also helps those in leadership positions to be more aware of diverse perspectives and creates more visibility within the organization for ERG members.



3. Professional Development

- Provide training opportunities that lead to locally and/or nationally recognized credentials whenever possible.
- Identify resources to support employee professional development, ideally during work time. This may include training funds, tuition assistance, or on-site workshops. It can also include taking on or assisting with special projects that offer opportunities for skill development outside of the individual's normal job scope.

- Include questions in Stay Interviews about whether the employee has been provided with opportunities for growth and development and whether the employer supports the employee's professional goals.
- Identify and inform staff of internal career pathways
- Identify not just the career pathway, but the skills needed to advance in this pathway and how employees can develop these skills.
- Regularly and transparently communicate career pathways to all workers.
- Create opportunities for employees to practice leadership by leading team or department meetings, chairing committees, or serving on boards and commissions.
- Create an Individual Development Plan (IDP) with each employee.
- Evaluate employees on their professional development goals on a regular basis, to ensure ongoing skill development.
- If possible, create varied opportunities for advancement.
 - For example, are there ways to grow within the company that do not involve supervising others?
 - Are staff recognized for becoming more efficient or knowledgeable at their current job?
 - Can there be different levels of that job (e.g. Senior Customer Service Representative, Lead Customer Service Representative, or Customer Service Representatives 1, 2, and 3?)
- Allow opportunities for entry-level staff to participate in committees, especially outside of their realm of their regular responsibilities.

Advancement Tools/Resources:

[Build Diversity in Leadership in These 3 Ways \(gartner.com\)](#)

[Diversity In Leadership: 6 Steps You Can Take Today - Inspireity](#)

[Diversity in leadership: Why it matters and what you can do - Workable](#)

[Apprenticeship Minnesota](#) – Department of Labor and Industry

[Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline Program](#) – Department of Labor and Industry

[Minnesota Youth Skills Training Program](#) – Department of Labor and Industry

Duluth and Northeast Minnesota [Talent Development Program](#)

Additional Resources

Contextual and Background Information

[Equity Definitions and Glossary of Terms](#) - Raciaequityterms.org

[Where Did BIPOC Come From?](#) - The New York Times

[A-Z of Disabilities and Accommodations](#) - Job Accommodation Network

Free [Harvard Implicit Bias Test](#)

[How to get Serious About Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace](#) - Janet Stovall

[What are structural, institutional and systemic racism?](#) - KGO-TV San Francisco

- o Article and video clip (3:51)
- o Round-table discussion about race, equity, and justice (59:14)
- o W. Kamau Bell discussion about racism and demonstrations (29:54)

Tools for Measuring DEI Initiatives

[Center for Economic Inclusion](#) - offers a Racial Equity Dividends Index for both the Public and Private Sector

[7 Metrics to Measure Your Organization's DEI Progress](#)— Lee Jourdan, Harvard Business Review (May 4, 2023)

[Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Institution](#) – Crossroads Ministry (n.d.)

[Organizational Race Equity Toolkit](#) – Washington Race Equity and Justice Initiative, Just Lead Washington (June 2018)(also contains a self-assessment tool)

[Racial Equity: Getting to Results](#) - Government Alliance on Race and Equity (July 2017)

[Economic Disparities Information and Data](#) - CareerForceMN.com

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Metrics Inventory](#) - Michigan Chamber of Commerce (2020)

Assessments

[Culturally Effective Organizations Framework: Organizational Assessment](#) - New Hampshire Equity Collective (March 2021)

[Race Matters Organizational Self-Assessment](#) - Annie E. Casey Foundation (2006)

[Racial Justice Organization Assessment](#) - Western States Center (n.d.)

[Antiracist Style Indicator](#) (a self-assessment for individuals) – D. Plummer (2020)

[Racial Identity Status Self-Assessment](#) (a self-assessment for individuals) – D. Plummer (2020)

[Diversity and Inclusion Self-Assessment](#) - National Association of Colleges and Employers (August 2022)

[Culturally Effective Organizations Framework](#) - New Hampshire Equity Collective (April 2015)

Additional Tools and Resources

[Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Playbook](#) - Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

[Employer Resources to Build an Inclusive Workplace](#) – CareerForceMN.com

[Words Matter: Guidelines on using inclusive language in the workplace](#) - British Columbia Public Service

[Leading White Accountability Groups Resource Links and Open Access Courses/Webinars](#), The Center for Transformation and Change, Dr. Kathy Obear

Group-Specific Tools and Resources

[Promising Practices in Achieving Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity: A Section 188 Disability Reference Guide](#) – US Department of Labor

[AskEARN | Inclusion@Work: A Framework for Building a Disability-Inclusive Organization](#) - Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) on Disability Inclusion

[LGBTQI+ Policy](#) – US Department of Labor

[Supporting LGBTQI+ Workers' Mental Health](#) – US Department of Labor

[Empowering LGBTQI+ workers: 7 key workplace protections and resources](#) – US Department of Labor

Situation Response Resources

[Human Rights Office](#) | Home (duluthmn.gov)

[Employment practices](#) | [Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry \(mn.gov\)](#)

[The Americans with Disabilities Act](#) | [ADA.gov](#)

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Resources*

*This is not unlimited free content

[7 Practical Ways to Reduce Bias in Your Hiring Process](#)

[Can Blind Hiring Improve Workplace Diversity?](#)

[New Employee Onboarding Guide](#)

[ADA Reasonable Accommodation Request Form](#)

[How to Boost Inclusion over a Meal](#)

[Food for Thought: Planning Inclusive Menus for Holiday Staff Gatherings](#)

Local DEI Consultants

There are a number of consultants and organizations focusing on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Northeast Minnesota, who can bring a local perspective and networks to their work. The Duluth Workforce Development Board recognizes this list is not comprehensive, nor intends to endorse these consultants and organizations over others. Employers are encouraged to do their own research and select a consultant based on their specific needs and priorities.

- Chris Davila, Davila DEI Consulting – www.daviladei.com; chris@daviladei.com
- Paula Pedersen and Susana Pelayo-Woodward - CirclesNotBoxes@gmail.com; 218-393-1458
- Jordon Johnson, True Being Consulting – www.truebeingconsulting.com
- Jebeh Cultural Consulting – www.jebhedmunds.com; info@jebhedmunds.com; 218-310-0600
- Cultural Fluency Associates – culturalfluencyassociates.com; kevin@culturalfluencyassociates.com; 218-940-0076
- The Promise is You – thepromiseisyou@gmail.com; 218-590-4816
- Diversity Consulting, LLC
- Peak Perspectives LLC – www.peakperspectives.biz; danny@peakperspectives.biz; 218-340-7015
- Racism Untaught (An Affiliate of Blackbird Revolt) – racismuntaught.com; getstarted@racismuntaught.com; 218-461-0198