Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

BEST PRACTICES

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Summary of Effort

This survey is a part of a larger effort to compile best practices regarding the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of individuals that identify as black, indigenous, or women of color in Minnesota.

Thank you to all the organizations that have submitted responses for the WTS MN Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Best Practices Survey. All organizations that have submitted the survey have identified that we can list their organization as participants. **We would like to thank the following organizations for participating:**

Metro Transit, Kimley»Horn, Richfield The Urban Hometown, WSB & Associates, Inc., SRF, HDR, wsp, Bolton & Menk, Stantec

Thank you. We appreciate your contribution to better understanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion best practices around the state and nationally.

Respondent Profiles

In total, 9 employers out of approximately 25 responded. Most of the employers that responded were Private For-Profit organizations with geographic scales ranging from International to Municipal.

Overview of Diversity and Inclusion Policies, Practices and Planning

As a part of this effort, we identified a list of policies and practices surrounding Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to ask respondents and gain an understanding of the tools currently being used. We found that several organizations either include D&I or DEI in their mission and/or vision, although most provide more identities and groups in that definition or have a broader definition than those identities focused on in this survey. There are also several organizations that track demographic data related to recruitment, retention, and advancement; and share that data internally. However, there are fewer organizations that analyze that data specifically within the context of D&I or DEI goals. Specifically as it relates to input by D&I or DEI groups into policies and goals or the development of measurable goals and outcomes for D&I or DEI. The following summary is based on the results of the policies and practices question (below) and some of the follow-up questions. We believe this outlines some areas that WTS Minnesota can focus on and assist with.

	Number of Organizations	Diversity and Inclusion Metrics
Most Common	8	• Tracks demographic data on outcomes for programs/policies geared toward recruitment, retention, and advancement
	7	• Actively tracks and reports data/metrics on D&I or DEI goals • Conducts exit interviews for all employees • Trains supervisors in cultural competency and/or unconscious bias
Moderate Implementation	6	• Makes a "business case" for D&I or DEI • Shares D&I or DEI goals and data internally • Breaks down de mographic data by job class or by position level and compensation
	5	• Conducts an internal assessment of culture • Has a diverse executive or leadership team • Has specific D&I or DEI policies or programs for recruitment, retention, and advancement • Develops talent programs with D&I or DEI goals in mind
	4	• Includes D&I or DEI in the organization's vision or mission • Includes D&I or DEI goals, policies, and/or training for hiring team and supervisors • Provides data to hiring managers about which roles, departments, or areas may be lacking diversity
Areas for Improvement	3	• Develops measurable goals for D&I or DEI • Shares D&I or DEI goals and data externally • Regularly solicits feedback from D&I or DEI groups on recruitment, retention, and advancement • Breaks down demographic data by salaried and hourly employees
	2	• Incentivizes participation in D&I or DEI programs for all staff

Table 1. Number of organizations implementing surveyed diversity and inclusion metrics

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Definition of D&I or DEI

Most Mission and/or Vision statements focus on wider definitions than those that identify as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color. For those organizations that provided the statements, some identified that the definition of D&I or DEI was broader than Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color and also included identity categories covered by Equal Employment Opportunity legislation, such as race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, national origin, qualified disability, medical condition, and veteran status. Others kept a general definition such as "diverse backgrounds" to avoid excluding any identity groups. There were a few statements that focused on the strength that diversity and inclusion bring to a team because it "retains the full spectrum of talent." Some also expanded beyond identity and discussed the importance of different life experiences and the need for people to bring their "whole selves" to work.

BEST PRACTICE:

"'SRF cultivates a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where all individuals feel respected, acknowledged, and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work. Our diversity drives our innovation; our inclusivity drives our approach.' This vision is incorporated into our business plan requiring our groups to include goals and action steps related to creating an inclusive environment and addressing our company culture." – *SRF*

Mission and Vision

Some companies included a direct reference to D&I or DEI in their mission or vision. Some, while not included in the core vision, made equity, inclusion, and/or belonging a focus of their strategic plan.

Measurable goals and D&I/DEI Accountability:

This is an evolving area. A few respondents provided example practices, but most replied that they were in process or trying to work more on this area. For existing metrics, several organizations provide affirmative action policies and staffing metrics. Others involve recruitment efforts and internal training.

One of the organizations noted that they deposit with Minority Depository Institutions, defined as institutions with a majority of leadership or ownership that are minority individuals and serve minority communities. Perhaps this is an initiative the WTS can find a way to assist with or an area we can lean into as an industry organization.

Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement:

Many companies look toward partnering with nationally recognized job boards that work with trade and professional organizations that organize and promote underrepresented communities in the industry. Respondents provided some specific trade organizations included such as American Indian Science and Engineering Society, National Society for Black Engineers, and Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers.

Another notable practice included partnering with community groups that serve under-represented communities to identify potential job candidates and provide free training for entry-level positions.

BEST PRACTICE:

"WSB created Opportunity+, a technical career pathway program that reduces and removes some of the barriers to a successful career as a civil engineering technician. The program targets traditionally underrepresented individuals in the AEC industry including women and people of color. Opportunity+ is a free, fast-paced training program that provides the skills necessary to build a long-term career in the civil engineering industry. WSB has hired several Opportunity+ graduates and partners with community organizations and other hiring partners to place graduates into jobs following program completion." – *WSB*

Although many organizations listed the involvement of Employee Resource Groups or D&I or DEI groups in supporting recruitment, retention and advancement, some notable practices included engagement at multiple levels of the organization. This involved developing training for hiring managers; ensuring diverse interview panels; providing annual diversity and equity scholarships; considering equity in advancement opportunities and salary during performance reviews; sharing and acting upon exit interview feedback; and building in support

and feedback loops for Employee Resource Groups and Diversity and Inclusion groups to support and build on each other's work.

BEST PRACTICE:

"Stantec has several I&D Councils across our global organization. Members of the I&D Councils reflect the diversity we hope to achieve across the company; they come from different cultures, have different outlooks, and possess a wide variety of skills and life experiences. They each have one important job: to execute our Inclusion & Diversity strategy. The Councils have an unwavering focus on making a difference and strengthening our inclusive culture...Furthermore, our ERGs are supported by our Inclusion & Diversity Councils and focus on four themes: Culture and Awareness, Career and Talent Development, Commerce and Adding Client Value, Engaging our Communities and Enhancing Corporate Social Responsibility." – *Stantec*

Internal Assessment

Most organizations conduct an internal assessment of culture that has a D&I or DEI component. However, the frequency varies between 5 years, every other year, or annually.

Areas Most Hopeful

Organizations also indicated areas that they were seeing progress in or new initiatives as the areas they were most hopeful about. Some of these include:

- Measurable progress from DEI efforts and affirmative action plans.
- Inclusion of equity in strategic planning efforts
- Strengthening and empowering ERG groups and D&I/DEI groups in organization and cultural change.
- Expansion of ERG groups to support more self-identifying traits such as Neurodiversity.
- Equity statements to inform each area of the organization and how it provides transportation services.

Areas for Growth

Organizations included a wide range of responses in areas for growth, key summary responses are below:

- Implementation of D&I/DEI goals - in terms of staffing, staff skill sets, and training.
- Recruitment, retention, and the promotion of diverse perspectives in the pipeline and up the ladder.
- Commitment to D&I and DEI up and down the organizational hierarchy, including buy-in to goals from all employees in the organization.
- And representation by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in leadership and management structures.

BEST PRACTICE:

"Metrics programming will provide our organization the structured accountability necessary for real equity work to be accomplished. ... The engagement survey which includes specific questions on DEI has been updated to be intentionally used to improve/influence organizational work. With leadership of our new Senior Manager of Transit Equity, our organization is defining its own Transit Equity statement to build shared understanding of how each department supports Transit Equity and what we are accountable to as an agency."– *Metro Transit*

SOME POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS FOR WTS MN AS A RESULT:

- Reach out to national and local professional and trade organizations identified in the table below focused on the groups we are targeting (Full list in table below) with this summary and data.
- Identify key areas WTS-MN can bring in experts, training, or work groups to assist organizations and members.
- Provide training opportunities for HR/Hiring Managers that are interested oriented toward key items identified:
  - Building in reciprocal and duplicative support/feedback systems for D&I, DEI with ERG's (retaining/promoting/ workplace culture).
  - Building out talent programs and networks (pipeline/recruitment).
  - Developing training and interview question review for hiring managers (pipeline/recruitment).
  - Developing qualitative and quantitative metrics that assess progress on D&I/DEI goals and providing tips for assessments that address key items and questions necessary to understand for an inclusive workplace culture.

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BEST DEI PRACTICES SUMMARY

Looking beyond gender and ethnicity	• Encourage employees to 'bring your whole self to work'. • Find ways to recognize different life experiences, not just identity. Recognize the importance of the distinct experiences and perspectives people bring to the workplace each and every day. • Expansion of ERG groups to support more self-identifying traits such as Neurodiversity.
External outreach to increase diverse hiring	• Staffing metrics in depositing with Minority Depository Institutions (those that have a majority of leadership or ownership that are minority individuals and serve minority communities). • Partnering with nationally recognized job boards and local groups that work with trade and professional organizations that organize and promote underrepresented communities. Examples: National Job Boards, *Circa, Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science, Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), American Indian OIC, National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), National Society for Black Engineers (NSBE), Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, (SHPE), Catalyst, Workplace Pride, Make it MSP, MIGIZI Communications Inc., Minneapolis American Indian Center*
External outreach to increase diverse hiring	• Partner with community agencies to identify candidates for specific open positions and provide free training for entry-level positions. • Develop training and interview question review for hiring managers. • Educate hiring managers and staff involved in the recruiting process. Work with leadership, I&D teams, human resources, and our recruitment teams to create inclusive hiring experiences and additional resources to include an Inclusive Hiring Guide for Managers, Unconscious Bias training, diverse interview panels, & an Annual Diversity & Equity Scholarship. • HR actively participating as a member of the internal DEI team. • Research and focus outreach to schools outside organization's demographics.
Retention	• DEI inclusion in talent development programs. • Train supervisors in cultural competency. • Engagement at multiple levels of the organization. Developing training for hiring managers; incorporating and reviewing exit interview feedback; and building in support and feedback loops for Employee Resource Groups and Diversity and Inclusion groups to support and build on each other's work. • Empowering ERG groups and D&I/DEI groups in decision-making about organizational and cultural change. This includes involving these groups in recommending and implementing actions or even metrics to achieve DEI goals and hold the organization accountable to them. • Build a shared understanding of how each department in the organization supports equity and promote an understanding of accountability.
Accountability/ Transparency	• Incorporate D&I or DEI goals into business plans and/or strategic planning for the organization. • Affirmative action plans, D&I or DEI goals and measures shared with clients and/or public to promote accountability. • Enable employees to submit anonymous concerns and ideas for improvement. • Track and analyze diverse hires, promotions, and terminations. Develop a consistent procedure when completing performance reviews and determining promotions that incorporates a focus on reviewing for equity in advancement opportunities and pay. • DEI committees meet with HR/leadership at a regular period to share progress and ask for ideas and recommendations for changes.

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