

2021

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Starter Kit for Member Associations

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www.wef.org/dei

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» INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this section, you are probably a committed volunteer for your Member Association (MA). As such, you are probably a pathfinder. Anyone beginning a journey into new territory understands that the right equipment will help them on the journey. This section presents ideas and information (tools) for leadership to consider when addressing DE&I for their MA.

A survey was conducted to learn from MA's, particularly regarding DE&I gaps and efforts in progress. Members of the Water Environment Federation House of Delegates DE&I Workgroup then went to work to provide a series of tools that would share the best ideas and information available.

» KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Respondents to the DE&I Survey identified the following factors as being key to their success:

- Engagement of passionate members.
- Consistency in communication.
- Personal stories that enhance and make real the importance of the topic.
- Support and leadership from the MA Board.
- Scheduled / routine D, E, & I committee meetings.
- Engaging YP members.
- Being realistic about what can be accomplished in a given period of time.
- The MA leadership must establish lines of communication and access to resources.
- It takes multiple people pushing together and encouraging each other. This is really hard work, first and foremost personally, and then beyond trying to address systemic long-standing issues. Tools, resources, and formal training is not enough, we need to see the people behind the topic, the people who are impacted, the faces of future people who will benefit from this work being done now.
- Need for partnership with MA committees.
- Engagement of colleges for INFLOW program.



» WHAT IS DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION?

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral to the mission of WEF. We believe that creating an inclusive and equitable organization is vital to ensuring that the diverse perspectives of our members are valued, respected, and considered. WEF believes that enhancing diversity with respect to race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, ability status, accent, socioeconomic status, cultural heritage and religion, parental status, marital status, personality type, political perspective, job classification, and all other characteristics of diversity allow us to better serve our members and the diverse water workforce.



Diversity, equity, and inclusion are not mutually exclusive and the success of one is dependent on the other two. For instance, diversity without inclusion can result in tokenism and inclusion cannot truly exist without diversity because those who are not present cannot be included. At the same time, equity is necessary to ensure the best outcomes from diversity and inclusion efforts. Therefore, these three definitions are intentionally connected.

• The 15 dynamic water professionals serving on the subcommittee represent the diverse perspectives and experiences that we hope to see more of within WEF and the water sector as a whole.

DIVERSITY

Diversity encompasses the varying experiences, strengths, skills, perspectives, personal characteristics, cultures, and backgrounds represented by and within the WEF community.

EQUITY

A commitment to equity means an environment where everyone has the opportunity to realize their full potential, and no-one is disadvantaged because of their group identity or other socially determined circumstance.

INCLUSION

The act of inclusion embraces and celebrates the perspectives, voices, values, and needs of each individual to generate a culture where all feel heard, respected, valued, and included in the broader WEF purpose.

Click to View WEF's Commitment to DE&I



WEF's Board of Trustees has established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee to provide guidance on our programs, communications, and membership. In 2020, WEF hired The Silverene Group to work with the subcommittee to develop a strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

» THE BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Against the backdrop of the WEF’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our organization, our industry is facing a number of significant challenges in workforce development.

1 AGING WORKFORCE

A phenomenon known as the “silver tide” of retirements is reducing the number of employees and the size of the pool from which to hire replacements. Even more compelling, workers in this sector tend to be older with a median age of 42.8 years as compared to the national median of 42.2 years.

2 A LACK OF DIVERSITY

In 2016, 85 percent of the workers were male and two thirds were white. This combined with rigidity in prevailing hiring procedures, and lack of training programs leads to difficulties in reaching out to different types of workers.

3 CHALLENGE OF RETENTION

Workers tend to migrate to areas of the country with a lower cost of living.

These are clear indications of the need for a new talent pipeline, one that values the diverse perspectives of our work force and is representative of the communities that we serve.

THE WATER INDUSTRY HAS OPPORTUNITIES

The water work force includes nearly 1.7 million people involved in designing, constructing, operating, and governing the US water infrastructure. While operators, electricians, and plumbers rank the largest occupations overall. There are also workers involved in administration, finance, and management. Utilization of the diversity, equity and inclusion toolkit components will expand the pool of available resources and promote job satisfaction. Make no mistake, consideration of a career in water requires outreach, recruitment, hiring and training efforts but we have significant benefits on the offer:

- 53% of water workers have a high school diploma or less.
- Many water occupations require extensive on-the-job training and familiarity with a variety of tools and technologies.
- Water occupations tend to pay more on average.
- Water occupations also pay up to 50 percent more to workers at lower ends of the income scale.
- The water industry is community based—we can’t outsource the work... and can’t import the workforce. Given this community connection, water utilities should be representative of the community in their workforce.

WORK FOR WATER WHY WATER CAREERS IN WATER GET STARTED VETERANS FOCUS NEWS About WEF • About AWWA • Contact Us

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Work for Water

All communities need clean water, so all communities need people like you. By choosing to work for water, you will embark on a rewarding, innovative, and challenging career that makes a lasting impact on public health, the environment, and a thriving economy. Jobs in water offer security, great pay, excellent benefits, training opportunities, and a chance to join a diverse team that works together to protect the future by protecting our world’s most valuable resource.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Learn more about career opportunities at Work for Water

Click to Learn More



THE RESULT IS A BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

While expanding the resource pool and reflecting the community in which we serve are of tremendous benefit, the McKinsey Report Diversity Wins – How Inclusion Matters, a five year study of over 1,000 large companies across 15 countries, provides extensive data on additional benefits of diversity.

Greater diversity, in terms of both gender and ethnicity, is correlated with significantly greater likelihood of outperformance.

- Competitive advantage: Companies whose boards are in the top quartile of gender diversity are 28% more likely to outperform their peers.
- Increased innovation and marketability of ideas.
- Drives employee retention and increased job satisfaction.
- Increased commitment: Employees and volunteers who feel connected and included are more engaged and involved.
- Promotes business growth and development.
- Taken collectively, these affect the bottom line —improving performance and increasing value/ revenues.

Bold actions are needed to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in WEF and your member associations. This toolkit has been developed to support your effort to:

- Ensure representation of diverse talent.
- Strengthen leadership accountability and capability for Inclusion and Diversity.
- Enable equality of opportunity through fairness and transparency.
- Promote openness and tackle microaggressions.
- Foster belonging through unequivocal support for multivariate diversity.



» TAKE THE JOURNEY

1 SPEAK WITH SOMEONE IN THE KNOW

The first step to take is to speak with someone who has taken the journey. Contact the Water Environment Federation (WEF) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) team. They have knowledge and experience that will help you to achieve your goals better, faster, and with fewer volunteer hours.

2 UNDERSTAND YOUR NEEDS

Not all MA's are alike. Some are large and some are small. Some have staff and others do not. The diversity needs of each MA will depend in large part on the geographical area in which it is located. Equity and inclusion may be different as well. Tool No. 1 and No. 2 (right) are offered to assist with this step.

3 DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT YOUR PROGRAM

Follow this checklist to cover each step.



Follow this checklist to cover each step

- Dedicate a 90 minute timeslot for discussion with your Board/committees.
- Conduct the DEI exercise included herein.
- Identify gaps and a champion.
- Survey membership for benchmarking.
- Charter a DE&I committee with mission and vision.
- Start a regional Inflow program.
- Leverage communications: Email, social media, and articles.
- Reach out to other committees and coordinate.
- Hold a focused conference session/workshop.
- Share back to WEF via delegates.

THE TOOLS

Tool No. 1

Exploring and Defining DE&I for your Member Association

A tool has been developed and designed that MA leadership can use to explore and define diversity, equity, and inclusion goals for their organization. The tool is presented in the stand alone section titled Tool No. 1, and is available in electronic format.

Tool No. 2

Action Ideas for Defining DE&I for your Member Association

This tool has many of the same ideas and concepts as Tool No. 1, with the exception that it can be used to create your own approach, or to fit into a collaboration model that your MA likes to use.

Tool No. 3

Start a Subcommittee: Example Vision and Mission Statements

Tool No. 4

Best Practices

Tool No. 5

InFlow Program Guidance

[Click to Learn More](#)



» REFERENCES

WEF House of Delegates – DE&I Workgroup				
DE&I Starter Kit Reference List				
NAME	AUTHOR	DATE	WEBSITE	COMMENTS
<i>WEF</i>				
WEF DE&I Website	WEF	Current	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (wef.org)	Contains information on WEF's DE&I programs
HOD DE&I Survey Results	WEF	2021		
WEF Website		Current	WEF InFlow Program	Contains links to more details about the program at WEF and Member Associations
WEF Inflow Brochure	WEF	2020	inflow-brochure-2021_2.11.21---final.pdf (wef.org)	Overview of WEF InFlow scholarship opportunities
<i>Member Associations</i>				
IWPA Inflow Web Page	Illinois WPC	2021	https://www.illinoiswpc.org/inflow.php	IWEA InFlow program overview and link to application for InFlow scholarship
PNCWA InFlow Web Page	Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association	Feb 2021	InFLOW Program (pncwa.org)	PNCWA InFlow program overview and link to contacts for more information
PNCWA Racial & Social Justice Initiatives Web Page	Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association	Aug 2021	PNCWA: Racial and Social Justice Initiatives	PNCWA Initiative overview and link to additional resources and contacts
NEWEA DE&I Committee Web Page	New England Water Environment Association	2021	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee* - NEWEA - New England Water Environment Association	NEWEA Committee overview and link to additional resources and NEWEA DE&I Award information
WEAT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee	Water Environment Association of Texas	2021	Water Environment Association of Texas Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (weat.org)	WEAT Committee contacts and link to mission and recent work
<i>Foundational Definitions</i>				
Diversity & Inclusion Maturity Index	Baker McKenzie and the CLOC D&I Steering Committee	2019		Review list of links within document - potentially good stuff / D&I Maturity Matrix may be a good best practices benchmarking tool for organizations
Renewing the Water Workforce - Improving water infrastructure and creating a pipeline to opportunity	Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings - Joseph Kane and Adie Tomer	Jun 2018	Renewing the water workforce: Improving water infrastructure and creating a pipeline to opportunity (brookings.edu)	Employment data analysis - water workforce
Diversity and Inclusion in Canada	Bersin by Deloitte	Aug 2014	Diversity and Inclusion in Canada - The Current State (deloitte.com)	Canada-focused research on DEI in business and organizations - why, governance, metrics
The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership	Deloitte University Press - Bernadette Dillon and Juliet Bourke	2016	Six signature traits of inclusive leadership Deloitte Insights	Article; Commitment, Courage, Cognizance of bias, curiosity, cultural intelligence, collaborative
National Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarking Study	Dalhousie University in partnership with CCDI	Feb 2019	20190222-research-national-diversity-and-inclusion-benchmarking-study.pdf (ccdi.ca)	Canada-focused; DEI senior leader perspectives, practices, conclusion

NAME	AUTHOR	DATE	WEBSITE	COMMENTS
<i>Business Case</i>				
Why Diversity Matters	McKinsey & Company	Jan 2015	Why diversity matters McKinsey	3 page article - business case for diversity
Delivering through Diversity	McKinsey & Company	Jan 2018	delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx (mckinsey.com)	Business case for inclusion & diversity
Diversity wins - How inclusion matters	McKinsey & Company	May 2020	How Diversity & Inclusion Matter McKinsey	56 pages - business case
Waiter, is that inclusion in my soup? A new recipe to improve business performance	Deloitte Australia	May 2013	deloitte-au-hc-diversity-inclusion-soup-0513.pdf	Business case for inclusion
<i>How To Guides & Activities</i>				
Diversity & Member Inclusion How-to Guide	AWWA	Revised 2014	Diversity How-To Guide (awwa.org)	How to Guide
Diversity and Inclusion - Keys to Success and Lessons Learned	ACEC DPC D&I Working Group	Mar 2020	DIWG-ExternalReport-March2020.pdf (engineers.org)	Good example of reference list
Racial Equity Toolkit - An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity	Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equality	Dec 2016	https://www.racialequityalliance.org/tools-resources/	Tool focused on racial equity in communities/government