



Georgia Department of Human Services Diversity Plan

July 1, 2003

Workforce Planning DHS Diversity Plan

Executive Summary

The charge: Complete a comprehensive DHS Diversity Plan that includes a common definition of diversity and strategies for managing and valuing diversity that are consistent with the Georgia Diversity Council Guidelines.

What we did: A Diversity Project Work Group, consisting of representatives of each Division and Office, was established. The full work team met seven times from October, 2002 through January, 2003. Four sub-groups were also established, and conducted additional meetings relative to their areas of assignment. Regular reports on the progress of the Work Group were made to the Workforce Planning Steering Committee, and the Committee has unanimously endorsed the draft plan.

What we learned: The composition of both the DHS workforce and the population of Georgia are changing rapidly, and the changes will be even more pronounced in the future. The available and highly qualified workforce will be older, with steadily increasing percentages of women, immigrants, and members of a wide spectrum of minority groups. Individuals with disabilities have a significant role in the workplace of the future. In short, the workforce is, and will continue to be, much less homogeneous than it was in the recent past. At the same time, the skill level of the workforce must improve as public service employees are required to respond to ever increasing challenges and demands for greater efficiency and effectiveness. We learned that diversity in our workforce will better enable DHS to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We believe that a workplace culture in which the individual employee is genuinely respected and valued for the contributions he or she makes to the DHS team is indispensable to accomplishment of the DHS mission.

What we recommend: The effectiveness of an organization in managing and valuing diversity depends to a significant degree on the commitment of the organization to management “best practices.” Managers who foster a work environment characterized by fairness, honest and open communication, teamwork, inclusion, and recognition will generally be successful in managing and valuing diversity. A basic premise of our approach to Diversity Planning is, therefore, the idea that effective diversity management begins with effective people management. More specific diversity initiatives, such as those contained in this plan, are unlikely to succeed without this solid foundation of basic sound management. **We recommend that the Diversity Plan and Program be viewed as an effort to enhance and supplement good management practices, rather than as an isolated effort. In one sense, the goal of our Diversity efforts is to maximize the extent to which management “best practices” are applied to all individuals, whether or not such individuals are perceived to be “different” by the manager or others.**

Establishment of a work culture in which diversity is valued requires leadership support and commitment. The DHS Leadership Team’s endorsement of the Diversity Statement and Purpose represents an important first step. The next step is to ensure that the philosophy and values stated therein are fully incorporated into each Division’s and Office’s methods of doing business. The Diversity Plan includes training, monitoring, and evaluation programs to facilitate this effort, but **we recommend that the Directors of each Division and Office take a leadership role in establishing a work culture in which diversity is valued.**

We view equal employment opportunity as a component of an effective Diversity Plan and Program. We have included provisions in the Plan to enhance the diversity of our applicant pools. **While selections should continue to be based on merit, we recommend regular monitoring of data to identify potential EEO concerns and to initiate corrective action when necessary.**

Definition Issue: The Diversity Work Group gave significant consideration to a common definition of Diversity. The Work Group had two concerns: first that we not define diversity so broadly that the term was rendered meaningless, and second, that we not define it so narrowly that particular members of the workforce felt excluded by the definition. The Work Group decided to focus on a Statement of Purpose, with a Philosophy and Values, rather than to define diversity. As the draft plan was reviewed, however, the Steering Committee reminded us that the charge we were given included the development of a common definition of Diversity. The definition issue was, accordingly, revisited, and the following working definition proposed:

Diversity consists of the differences in people that have been historically, or are currently, viewed as bases for differences in the manner in which people are treated, both in and outside the workforce.¹

By defining Diversity in this manner, and by clearly stating our DHS Diversity Philosophy and Values, we acknowledge that the purpose of the Diversity Plan is to affect change. Stated another way, there would be no need for a Diversity Plan if all of our employees were already fully willing and able to work with people they perceive to be different, in a manner that does not create disadvantages for those perceived to be different. We seek through the Diversity Plan to ensure to the greatest extent possible that the differences referenced in the definition are fully respected and valued, and regarded as desirable and positive characteristics of our workforce.

¹ It is understood that this is only one of the many ways in which Diversity can be defined. By way of example, the Georgia Diversity Council has defined Diversity as “the mixture of similarities and differences of people, processes, functions, services and all other events that bring people together.” The definition adopted for purposes of this Plan is an effort to facilitate a common understanding of what we hope to accomplish through implementation of the Plan.

DHS Diversity Plan

Statement and Purpose

The Georgia Department of Human Services solicits, welcomes, includes and values the contributions of all employees. DHS creates and fosters an environment that embraces the rich diversity of its employees, community and customers. By doing so, the quality of services to Georgia's diverse, multicultural population is enhanced.

Philosophy and Values

The Georgia Department of Human Services recognizes and values the unique backgrounds and perspectives of its workforce. We see these as strengths and seek to understand, encourage and draw upon the unique skills and values of each individual. The contributions of each employee at all levels in DHS are vital to the success of our organization.

DHS values:

- ❖ *The treatment of each individual employee with dignity and professional respect*
- ❖ *Diverse applicant pools representative of the Georgia labor market, from which to make hiring and promotion decisions*
- ❖ *The wealth of knowledge and ideas that result from promoting and reflecting different approaches and perspectives within the workforce*
- ❖ *Development of staff at all levels to maximize their potential, productivity, promotional opportunities and satisfaction*
- ❖ *A spirit of teamwork among its employees*
- ❖ *Recognition of employees, as individuals and as team members, for exceptional performance*

Purpose

The purpose of the DHS Diversity plan is to promote, integrate, implement and evaluate a variety of diversity initiatives that better serve our employees.

Definition

Diversity consists of the differences in people that have been historically, or are currently, viewed as bases for differences in the manner in which people are treated, both in and outside the workforce.¹

By defining Diversity in this manner, and by clearly stating our DHS Diversity Philosophy and Values, we acknowledge that the purpose of the Diversity Plan is to affect change, on an incremental basis. We seek to ensure to the greatest extent possible that the differences referenced in the definition are fully respected and valued and regarded by all as desirable and positive characteristics of our workforce.

Communication

The DHS Diversity Plan will be posted on the web sites of the Department of Human Services and the Office of Human Resource Management. Division and Office Directors will ensure that a copy of the Diversity Plan is readily available to each DHS employee. The Diversity Statement of Purpose, Philosophy and Values will be posted in a prominent location in each DHS office or facility. The Diversity Plan will be introduced to DHS employees via a memorandum to all employees from Commissioner Martin.

This Plan represents a beginning point, rather than an end product. As individuals and teams address Diversity-related issues, it is expected that there will be suggestions for improvement, with resulting revisions to the Plan and/or implementation strategies. Such suggestions are encouraged.

Diversity Training

The effective implementation and sustained vitality of the Department's diversity initiative and this Diversity Plan will rest substantially on appropriately trained employees at all levels. It is determined that the training, therefore, will need to be mandatory and multi-tiered with separate modules developed for administrators, mid-level managers and supervisors, and line employees. Training methods may include in-class sessions, taped videos and other media, use of relevant internal and external consultants, as well as access to other diversity resources. Diversity training will be provided first to the DHS Leadership Team and other administrators. The second phase of training will include middle managers and first line supervisors. The third phase will include non-supervisory employees.

The Commissioner and the DHS Leadership Team have essential roles in the implementation of diversity training within the department. Establishing the diversity vision and communicating the business and service delivery case for this important undertaking must occur at this level within DHS. Only through the actions of leadership can the diversity tone and climate be meaningfully established and accountability reasonably expected of others in the department.

Training directed at diversity interests in both employment and service delivery is put forward in this plan. Employees who deliver our client services must be aware of, and sensitive to, DHS's emerging and culturally diverse client population. Training directed at providing tools for effectively communicating across client culture groups and managing diverse co-worker relationships is important to successfully navigating culturally changing employment and service delivery situations.

Mid-level managers and supervisors are essential participants in the implementation of this plan. Their actions will be a significant barometer to employees as to whether DHS is truly committed to the diversity values expressed in

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this plan, and communicated in the training. Emphasis will be placed on factors affecting quality of communication, the impact of culture in the workplace, understanding organizational culture, DHS diversity goals and objectives, and effectively communicating across cultures.

In addition to the training modules, other actions will be needed to ensure that the value of diversity is fully incorporated into the DHS work culture. Expanding current policy to incorporate and emphasize diversity specific language, and creating means of informing DHS organizations of our diversity successes and areas in need of attention will further advance DHS's diversity values.

Recruitment and Selection

It is recognized that a variety of recruitment methods are used to develop applicant pools for positions, depending on the nature, level, and location of the individual position. It is the responsibility of human resource representatives, and DHS managers and supervisors involved in employee selection, to consider the composition of the work unit and the likely applicant pool before deciding on a recruitment strategy. In general, if narrowing eligibility for positions to a particular organizational component of the Department results in a pattern of homogeneous applicant pools, such a strategy should be reevaluated in favor of wider, more open recruitment. Recruitment practices will be regularly reviewed and evaluated by managers at all levels of the organization as part of the performance management process.

In the interest of providing hiring managers with additional resources for enhancing the diversity of applicant pools, a "Diversity Resource Guide" will be maintained on the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Office of Human Resource Management (OHRMD) websites. The Resource Guide will be updated on a regular basis.

All selection decisions must be based on merit. It is expected that merit based selections made from diverse applicant pools will result naturally in a diverse workforce. Selection practices will be regularly reviewed and evaluated by managers at all levels of the organization as part of the performance management process. Additionally, the Office of Human Resource Management (OHRMD) will review selection, applicant flow, and workforce profile data, and work with Division and Office management to identify problems and take appropriate action, as necessary. Analysis of the data may include, but is not limited to:

- *Comparison of selection and applicant flow rates*
- *Comparison of workforce profiles from one date to another*
- *Identification of homogeneous work units or work units in which members of a group are concentrated in certain jobs or at certain levels*

Proposed actions will be presented by OHRMD or the Division/Office for discussion and implementation as necessary.

The DHS Employee Selection Handbook will be updated and made available on the OHRMD website.

DHS Recruitment and Selection Training will include the diversity implications of the recruitment and selection processes.

Work Environment

As set forth in the Diversity Statement and Purpose, DHS values the contributions of each individual employee and the treatment of each employee with dignity and professional respect. Each manager and supervisor is expected to engage in practices that demonstrate and foster this value. These practices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Treating each individual employee with dignity and professional respect
- Ensuring that individual differences are managed in a positive manner for the benefit of the organization
- Communicating with each employee in a manner that facilitates inclusion and teamwork
- Developing staff at all levels to maximize their potential, productivity, promotional opportunities and satisfaction
- Recognizing employees, as individuals and as team members, for exceptional performance
- Providing equal opportunity for development, recognition, promotion, incentive pay, mentoring, and other programs for enhancement of employee satisfaction and retention

Management practices relative to Diversity and Equal Opportunity will be regularly reviewed and evaluated at all levels of the organization as part of the performance management process.

Exit interviews will be monitored for patterns or other concerns related to Diversity management. OHRMD will bring such patterns or concerns to the attention of Division/Office management for evaluation and appropriate action.

Success stories relative to Diversity will be regularly celebrated in the "Human Side," the Department's quarterly newsletter. Divisions and Offices should encourage their employees to submit suggested articles or subject matter to the DHS Office of Communications.

Vendor Diversity Practices

Consistent with its commitment to valuing diversity, DHS is committed to ensuring that small and diverse businesses have a fair and equal opportunity to participate in the Department's purchasing and contracting. For purposes of this plan, the term vendor refers to an entity or individual with whom the Department contracts to perform services in the absence of an employer/employee relationship.

The Department shall make a concerted and continual effort to increase the level of diverse business participation by increasing bid opportunities extended to the diverse community and by providing direct guidance concerning the process to diverse vendors.

The DHS Office of Financial Services (OFS), Procurement/Contracts section shall coordinate and ensure that the department is in compliance with Federal and Georgia laws and Executive Orders of the Governor relative to vendors.

The Department's responsibility relative to vendors is shared by the Office of Financial Services (OFS) and the various regional and state program offices. OFS will function as primary coordinator of the Department's vendor Diversity interests.

The Georgia Procurement Manual established pursuant to Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A) 50-5-54 is the main document guiding procurement policy, process and procedure for all state agencies. The Department will adhere to the provisions in this law relative to Business Participation.

OFS will monitor compliance with the nondiscrimination clause in the Department's contracts.

OFS will monitor the compliance of vendors with the Department's diversity and nondiscrimination policy by conducting periodic customer satisfaction surveys that will include questions regarding vendor compliance with diversity requirements where applicable. Divisions and Offices will also provide appropriate corrective intervention to ensure timely compliance by vendors.

Monitoring and Evaluation

DHS leadership must be able to monitor and evaluate compliance with the Diversity Plan. Toward that end, several key action steps, the responsible party for each step, and a timetable for achievement are as follows:

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COMPLETE BY:
Post DHS Diversity Plan on DHS and OHRMD websites	Communications, OHRMD	July 1, 2003
Ensure that copy of Diversity Plan is readily available to each DHS employee	Division/Office Directors	July 1, 2003
Post Diversity Statement of Purpose, Philosophy and Values in each DHS office and facility	OHRMD/Communications/Division & Office Directors	August 1, 2003
Modify DHS Human Resources policies to include provisions supportive of the Diversity program	OHRMD	August 1, 2003
Develop Workforce Diversity Training module for administrators	OHRMD/HROD	September 1, 2003
Develop Workforce Diversity Training module for middle managers and first line supervisors	OHRMD/HROD	May 1, 2004
Develop Workforce Diversity Training module for non-supervisory employees	OHRMD/HROD	June 1, 2004
Complete Workforce Diversity Training for administrators	OHRMD/HROD	June 1, 2004
Complete Workforce Diversity Training for middle managers and first line supervisors	OHRMD/HROD	December 31, 2004
Complete Workforce Diversity training for non-supervisory employees	OHRMD/HROD	October 31, 2005
Review and evaluate recruitment practices	OHRMD/Field HR Staff/All DHS Managers	Ongoing--Continuous
Post Diversity Resource Guide on DHS and OHRMD websites	Communications/OHRMD	August 1, 2003
Update Resource Guide	Communications/OHRMD	Ongoing--Semi-annually
Review and evaluate selection practices	OHRMD/Field HR Staff/All DHS Managers	Ongoing--Continuous

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COMPLETE BY:
Review selection, applicant flow, and workforce profile data	OHRMD	October 31, 2003 for 1 st quarter FY04; quarterly thereafter
Identify problems and take appropriate action	OHRMD/Division & Office Leadership	As necessary
Maintain and update Employee Selection Handbook	OHRMD	July 1, 2003 and ongoing
Include Diversity discussion in Selection/Recruitment training	OHRMD	June 1, 2003 and ongoing
Include Diversity discussion in new employee orientation	OHRMD/HROD/Field Orientation Providers	June 1, 2003 and ongoing
Monitor exit interviews for diversity issues	OHRMD	June 1, 2003 and ongoing
Use "Human Side" to market diversity success stories	Communications	June 1, 2003 and ongoing
Coordinate and monitor compliance with the Limited English Speaking/Sensory Impaired Plan	Policy and Government Services	June 1, 2003 and ongoing
Ensure non-discrimination in vendor practices	OFS/Divisions & Offices	Ongoing
Conduct surveys of customer satisfaction relative to vendor performance	OFS	October 1, 2003 and at least annually thereafter

In addition to monitoring for plan compliance, there will be a need for evaluation of the impact of the plan and the Department's Diversity initiatives on the Department as a place to work. It is important, therefore, that evaluation measures and techniques be developed to determine to what extent "valuing diversity" is incorporated into the Department's work culture and methods of doing business, and the impact of the Plan on our recruitment and selection practices and the quality of our work environment. The responsibility for such evaluation will rest with the leadership of each Division and Office. To facilitate the evaluation process, a standing Evaluation Committee, consisting of Division/Office representatives, will be appointed, to be chaired by representatives of the Office of Human Resource Management.

Areas of evaluation for consideration by the Evaluation Committee will include the following:

- Diversity of Applicant Pools and compliance with EEO laws
- Improvement in employee work environments
- Sensitivity to cultural and other differences among employees
- Improved employee satisfaction
- Diversity of vendors

- Improved provision of services (as reflected in cultural adaptations and translation of marketing and other employment/services materials and information)

This list of diversity performance areas is not intended to be exhaustive. The Evaluation Committee may identify additional or different diversity performance areas to monitor and evaluate.

The Evaluation Committee will also have responsibility for reviewing the Performance Management Process for methods of evaluating the diversity-related performance of individual employees, and making appropriate recommendations.

The schedule of activities for the Evaluation Committee is as follows:

ACTION	DATE
Committee established	September 1, 2003
Monitoring of Plan Compliance	September, 2003 and ongoing
Determination of methods of evaluating Plan impact	May 1, 2004
Determination of method of using the Performance Management Process for diversity-related performance	May 1, 2004
Determination of method of assessing employee perceptions relative to diversity	May 1, 2004